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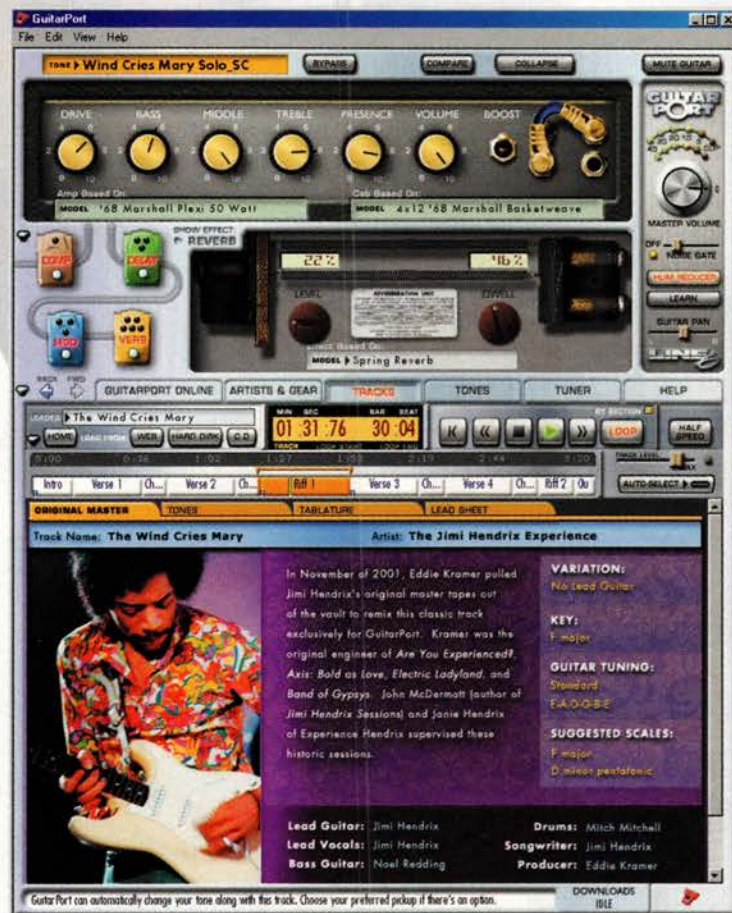
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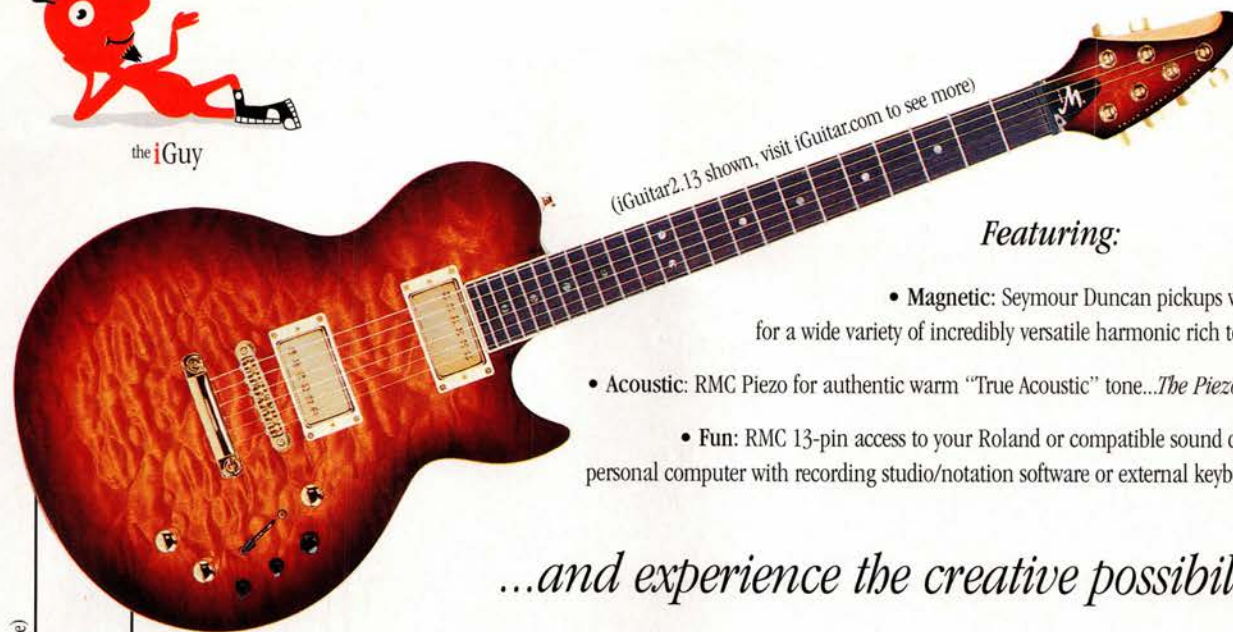
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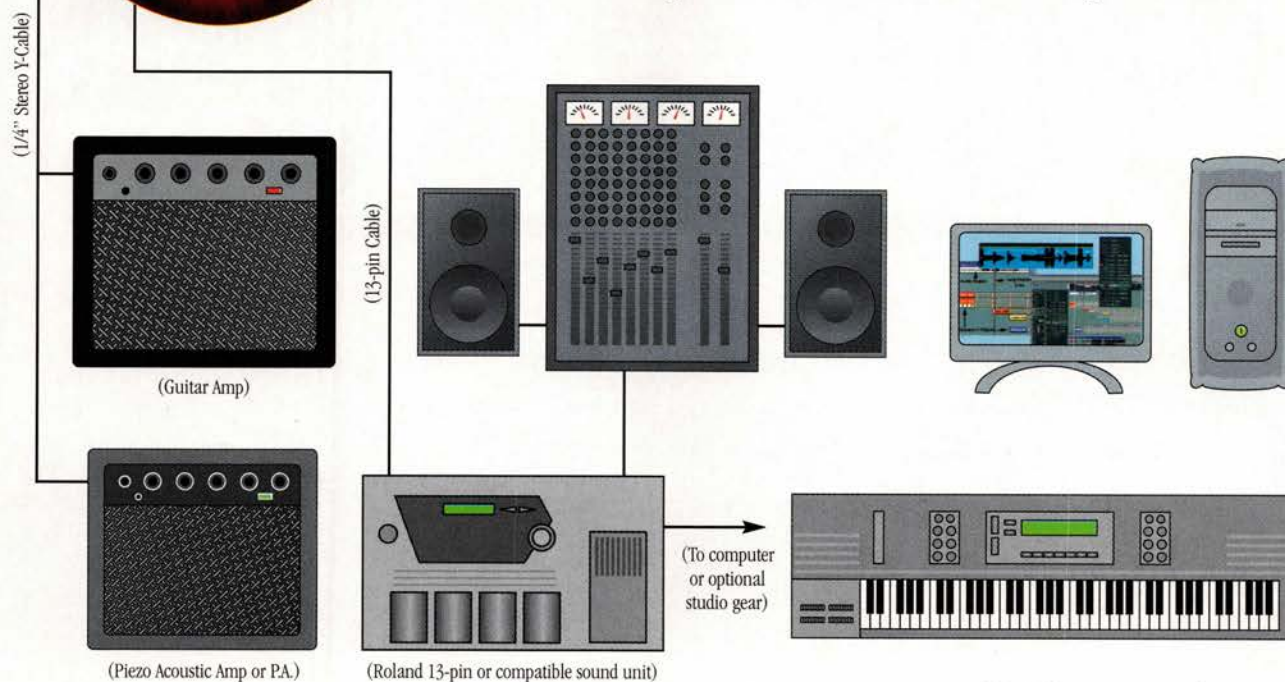
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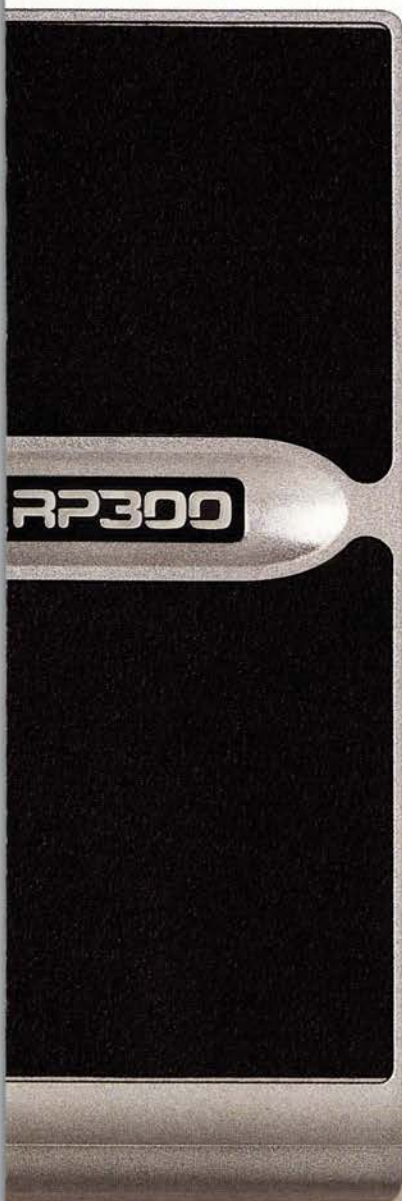
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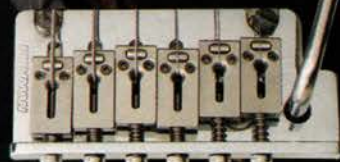
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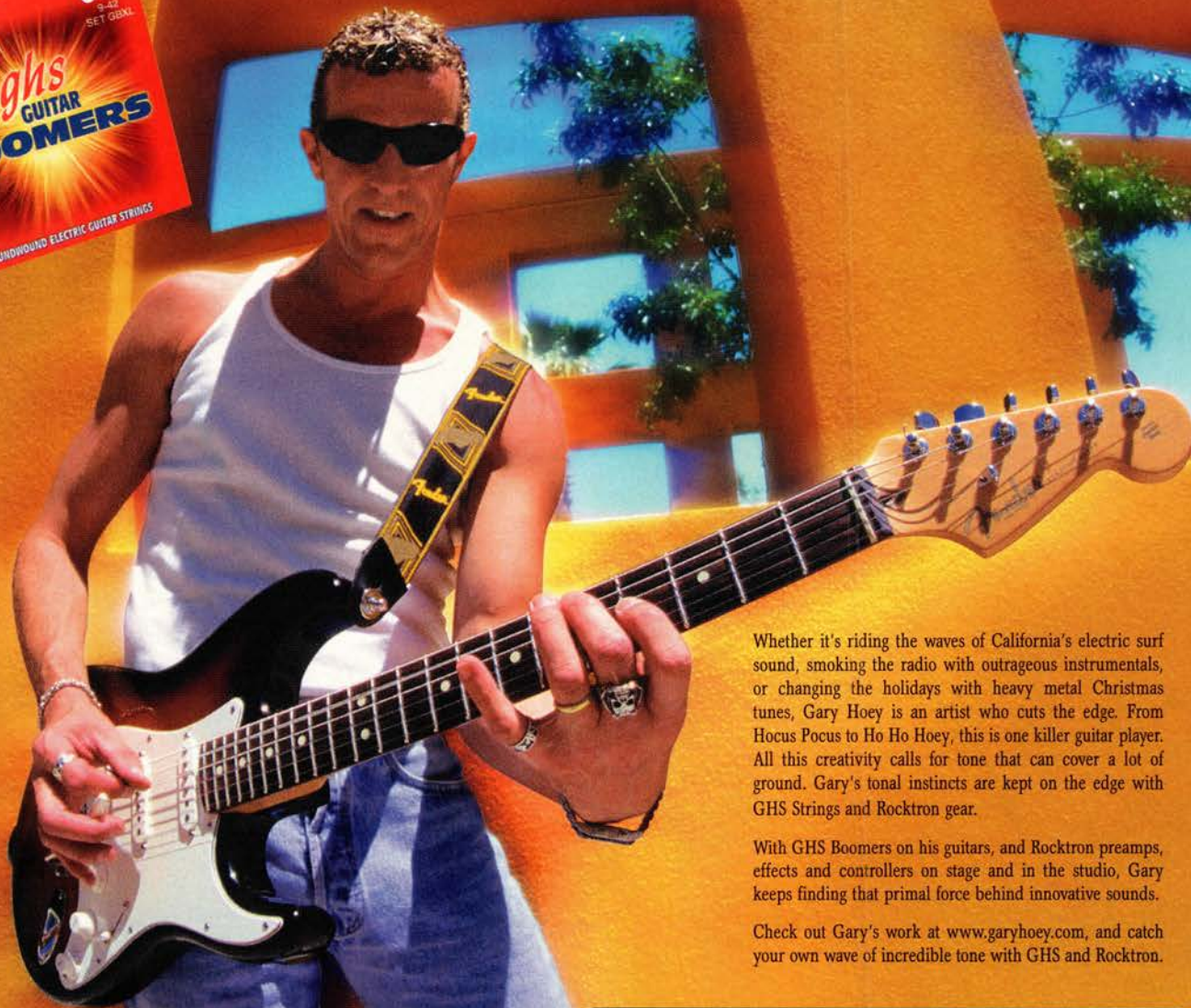
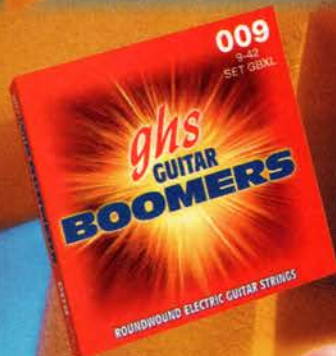
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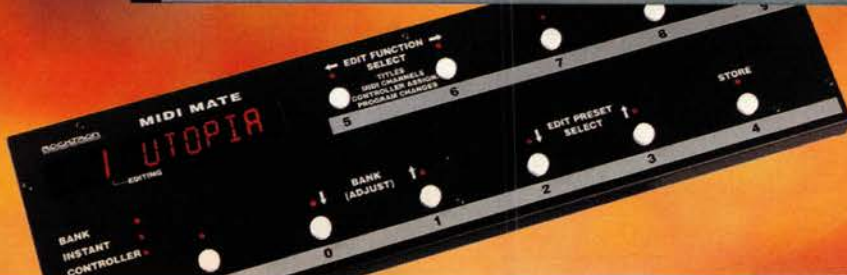
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# Guitar Player

ISSUE 389 • VOL. 36 NO. 5 guitarplayer.com

## Toolbox

- 22 Studio ace/jazz giant **Kenny Burrell** gets the hero treatment, **Jerry Donahue** names his favorite *GP*, **Steve Kimock** reveals his jam plan, **Buddy Guy**'s famous polka-dot Strat's setup, **Scott Ian**'s Anthrax rig, and more!

## Profiles

### 31 The Word

Sacred Steel goes secular as pedal man **Robert Randolph** teams up with **Luther Dickinson**. BY ANDY ELLIS

### 37 Monte Montgomery

The latest Austin hotshot works his Texas magic on *acoustic* guitar. BY JUDE GOLD

### 41 Jucifer

**Amber Valentine** hogs *all* the riff headroom in her guitar-and-drums duo. BY MICHAEL MOLEND

### 45 Reverend Horton Heat

The high priest of rockabilly soups up his playing for *Lucky 7*. BY DARRIN FOX

### 49 Concrete Blonde

**Jim Mankey** uses a minimum of gear to blend a maximum of styles. BY CHRISTIAN WISSMULLER

## Features

### 54 STEVE MORSE Morse Code

The ex-Dregs, ex-Kansas, current-Deep Purple guitar god finds time to release another monstrous solo album. BY DARRIN FOX

### 62 LESSON Roots Rock Pilgrimage

Revisit the early days of rockabilly and learn **Scotty Moore** and **Carl Perkins** licks you can use in a variety of styles. BY ANDY ELLIS

### 72 ERIC SARDINAS Tattooed Blues

The black sheep of the Dobro takes a wild slide ride on *Devil's Train*. BY SHAWN HAMMOND

### 82 COVER STORY New Gear 2002

Check out the latest, greatest, and sexiest equipment from this year's Winter NAMM Show. BY THE GUITAR PLAYER STAFF



82

THE DROOL-WORTHY  
D'ANGELICO  
GIVEAWAY  
p. 129

## Bench Tests

### 106 Action Jackson

Jackson Swee-Tone Jazz'R SC.  
BY MATT BLACKETT

### 111 Fab Filter Box

Roger Linn Design AdrenaLinn.  
BY JOE GORE

### 117 Above and Beyond

Martin 18VLJ Laurence Juber  
Signature Edition. BY ART THOMPSON

### 123 Exotica

Turner Model 1C-P Custom.  
BY JUDE GOLD

### 136 Chops Builder

Double-Stop Blues BY JUDE GOLD

Pedal-Point Comping BY PINO MARRONE

Pentatonic Ladders BY PATHIK DESAI

35th Anniversary Classic

Column: Arnie Berle

Reader's Challenge



54

## Departments

14 Soundhole

20 Feedback

127 Reviews

146 Classifieds

151 Advertiser Index

152 Encore: Ry Cooder,  
classic interview, 1980



41



123



# Soundhole How Much Do You Really Love Your Guitar?

**P**erhaps the most frightening thing a creative entity can face is the realization he or she is settling into a comfy predictability. Hey, it happens to everyone at some point. You latch onto a significant other, pop for a house, birth a few kiddies (or adopt some cuddly pets), and score a gig that actually pays you enough to build up that prized "discretionary income." Who in their right mind would trade such goodies for the torment of uncertainty?

Well, um, how about scores of musicians, painters, novelists, choreographers, and dancers who need occasional doses of anarchy to keep their muses striving for innovation? This is not to say that all artists must suffer for their art. What a depressing myth *that* is! We should take absolute joy in our

creations, and those creations can certainly be inspired by goodness as much as sorrow and pain. But the comfort question is an entirely different beast: Can creative brilliance spring from an individual who has settled into a safe and secure routine?

For guitarists, "safe and secure" can mean relying on the same licks and scales. Or it can manifest as an attitude that believes learning new things would disrupt one's innate sense of style. It can even develop from an enthusiasm to experience myriad styles and approaches that never delves deeper than surface riffs. And, let's face it, a comfy lifestyle can indeed get in the way of setting aside enough quiet time for study, practice, and exploration.

In these cases, comfort *is* the enemy of creativity, and that's

tough to accept. Many musicians don't want to face the fact they have been transformed from gut-level creators to ordinary people with substantially de-prioritized musical lives. In fact, I often meet people who act as if music is more important than breathing, when they haven't listened to a new artist since Stevie Ray Vaughan, and haven't abandoned old habits in favor of stumbling over themselves to discover something new since they played in garage bands.

If this sounds like you, it *is* you. And you may be fooling yourself and your buddies, but you ain't putting one over on your guitar. No way. It sits there begging you to take it somewhere interesting, and every time you pick it up, it gets damned to a session of the "same old, same old." Why not get



a little punk all over yourself and risk a bit of angst? Submitting to creative anguish for a few hours won't tank your lifestyle, but it just might stimulate your passion and intellect to produce something innovative and beautiful (or terrible and thought provoking). And when you pick up your guitar and surprise it with some fearless exploration, that baby is gonna fall in love with you all over again.

—MICHAEL MOLENDRA ■

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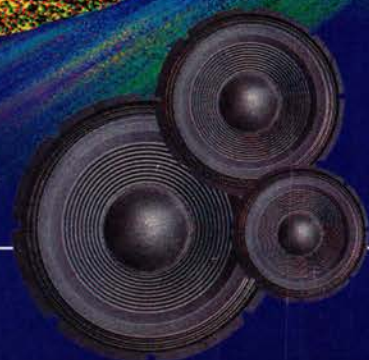




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# Feedback

## George Harrison

**T**hank you for the best tribute to George [March '02] of all the publications. The praise from other musicians was a nice touch. It was also great to see the photos George had taken and annotated himself. Well done!

Roger Cleven  
Snoqualmie, WA

Kudos to Michael Molenda for his sensitive introduction to your George Harrison article. Michael not only expressed what millions of Baby Boomers feel about our collective loss, he also revealed the lesser-known side of George: The man was all about guitars.

To a generation that has far too many landmark moments, the article makes it known to all that, in spite of all that has come since, George Harrison and the Beatles is where it all came from. Let that not be forgotten—no matter how many gazillion notes-per-second you can play.

Kurt H. Selvig  
Portland, OR

I really identified with your March 2002 Soundhole column on George Harrison's passing. I'm 43 years old, and when I first heard Harrison's wonderful lead guitar work with the Beatles, I was inspired to give guitar playing a try. Harrison and the Beatles did me a great service by playing "classic rock" by other artists, such as Little Richard, Chuck Berry, and Carl Perkins. Had it not been for the Beatles, I may not have sought out records by these early rock and roll legends.

Harrison remained the quiet, intelligent, and sometimes underrated player with dignity and a sense of peace that was always real. He showed the way to a generation of guitarists by challenging them to use their minds and hearts to create the ultimate art form—*music*!

We will all miss George Harrison, but, thankfully, we will always have our recordings, videos, books, and your great tribute to him in the March 2002 issue of *Guitar Player*. God bless you, George. Thank you, *Guitar Player*.

Scott Meli  
Rochester, NY

I'm a big George Harrison fan. I pull out my guitar every day and play his music, but

I don't think the man should be praised beyond his station just because he's dead. Brian Setzer, in the March issue, claims that "George was the one" who thought up riffs for Lennon and McCartney songs. On what evidence does he make this stunning assertion? Unless he can produce proof to the contrary, he should stick to the historical facts, and the facts, as revealed by numerous interviews—with Lennon, McCartney, and George Martin—the research of Mark Lewisohn, and numerous other sources, is that Lennon and McCartney created their own riffs the vast majority of the time—I'd guess 98 percent of the time.

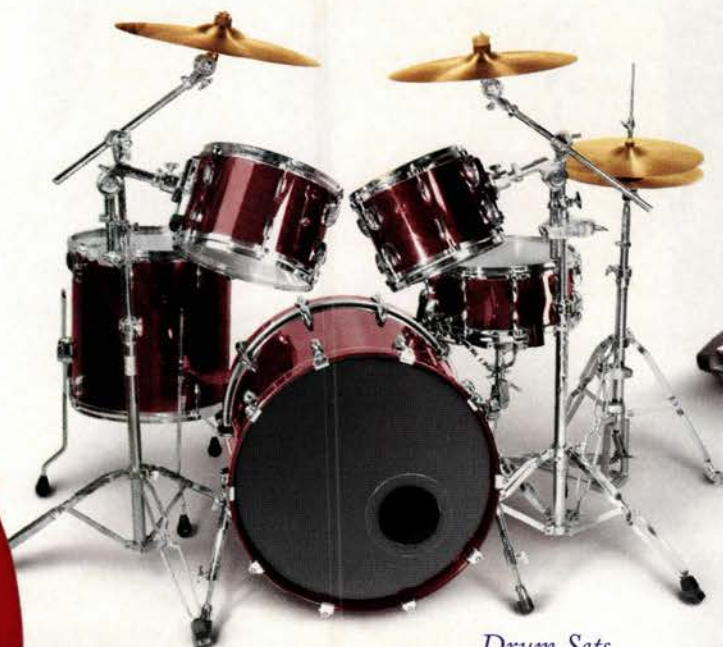
Bob Frost  
San Francisco, CA

## Fugazi

I just wanted to say "thanks" for the article on Fugazi [February '02]. Ian and Guy deserve acknowledgement for their wonderful contributions to the world of guitar and music. The band is constantly evolving and creating amazing material on every record, and at every show. They're one of the best bands out there right now.

Michael Dooley  
Denver, CO

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## So Many Losses

The only thing I would change about *Guitar Player* would be less farewell stories. Seems like lately there have been far too many goodbyes. I share the same opinion as General Patton, who said, "It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died, rather we should thank God that such men lived." I can't help but notice and be proud that there seems to be a common thread amongst all the greats: Decency. Goodbye John, Chet, and George.

Gregg Tomchick  
Huntington Beach, CA

## Glad We Could Help

I've been playing guitar since the Nixon administration, and the March "Reader's Challenge" [Chop's Builder, March '02] just taught me I can switch fingers while playing the same note (the two Bs in bar 2) to set myself up for a position shift. I never would have thought of this on my own, and this is why I continue to renew my subscription.

David Bolger  
Margate, NJ

## Lessons

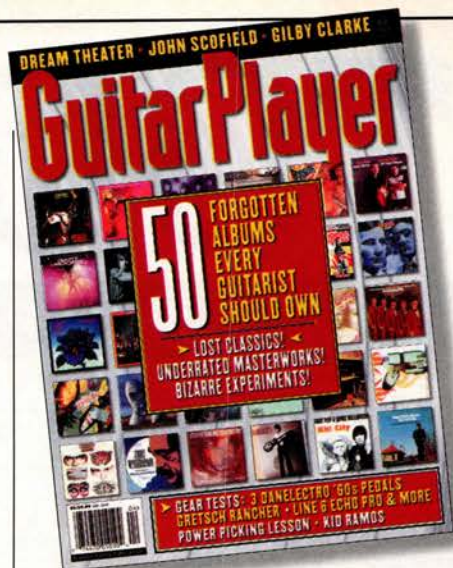
A couple of months ago, I was feeling sorry for myself because I couldn't afford to take guitar lessons. Then it hit me—I have 25 years worth of *Guitar Player*, with zillions of columns! Since my rediscovery, I've had a lot of fun and learned a lot—and it's also very therapeutic! Thanks for all the hot licks, new chords, and funny scales.

Eric Iverson  
Jackson Heights, NY

## OOPS!

Although the official souvenir book of George Harrison's Japan tour identified his Tele-style guitar as a "Fender Roy Buchanan Bluesmaster Telecaster," this was, apparently, a mistake. Michael C. White of Lexington, Kentucky, and Marc Fisher of Pompano Beach, Florida, wrote to correct our March 2002 cover story, stating that Harrison's guitar was, in fact, a three-pickup, tele-style model called the Roy Buchanan Bluesmaster that was crafted by Roger Fritz in his workshop in Mobile, Alabama.

In our recently published high-end buyer's guide, *Dream Machines*, we printed the in-



correct contact information for THD Electronics, Inc. They can actually be reached at 4816 15th Ave. N.W., Seattle, WA 98107; (206) 781-550. Sorry for the oversight!

Address correspondence to Feedback, c/o *Guitar Player*, 2800 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403, or e-mail us at [guitplyr@musicplayer.com](mailto:guitplyr@musicplayer.com). GP regrets that until the advent of the 40-hour workday we will not be able to answer every letter.

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In January, **Van Halen** split with **Warner Bros.**, their label of more than 23 years. According to a label spokesperson, the split was amicable, and no new label plans have been announced. Changes abound with the Van Halen crew, as they also announced that Don Engel—their attorney of 15 years—is no longer employed by the band. . . . **SAFETY FIRST:**

Oozing with irony, stoner rock heroes **Queens of the Stone Age** have provided the soundtrack for a San Diego County educational film on the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. Slated to be shown to high school driver's education classes, the unnamed film will feature "Better Living through Chemistry," off 2000's *R* album. Says frontman Josh Homme: "I feel like doing donuts in San Diego county and dropping my name when the cops come. Working on the film is like a get-out-of-jail-free card."

. . . **PASSING NOTES:** **John Jackson**, considered a master of East Coast blues, died on January 20 from complications related to liver cancer. He was 78. Over the course of his career, Jackson recorded nine albums (on Alligator, Arhoolie, and Rounder records), played Jimmie Carter's Labor Picnic at the White House, and won the National Endowment for the Arts' National Heritage Fellowship in 1986. . . . **Hiroshi Sugimura**, president of Takamine Guitars, passed away on January 9 after a year of battling liver disease and lung deficiencies.

## > PAWNSHOP PRIZE

### EKO Kadett

**T**he '60s-era guitars from Italian maker EKO represent the pinnacle of a design style that flaunted swooping lines, flashy finishes, and mysterious controls. EKOs are coveted pawnshop finds these days, and many—like the Kadett featured here—are perfectly stage-worthy instruments.

One of the more basic models in EKO's extensive line, the Kadett is a relatively simple guitar that sounds and plays exceptionally well. The bolt-on neck is well shaped and easy to get around on, and the contoured body is light and comfy. The single-coil pickups are selected via three bat-handled on/off switches, and volume and tone adjustments are dialed in using the thumbwheels above the pickups. It's kind of a clunky system with the switches and controls so far apart, but at least you can activate all the pickup combinations—including the outside pair, or all pickups at once.

Many '60s guitars have

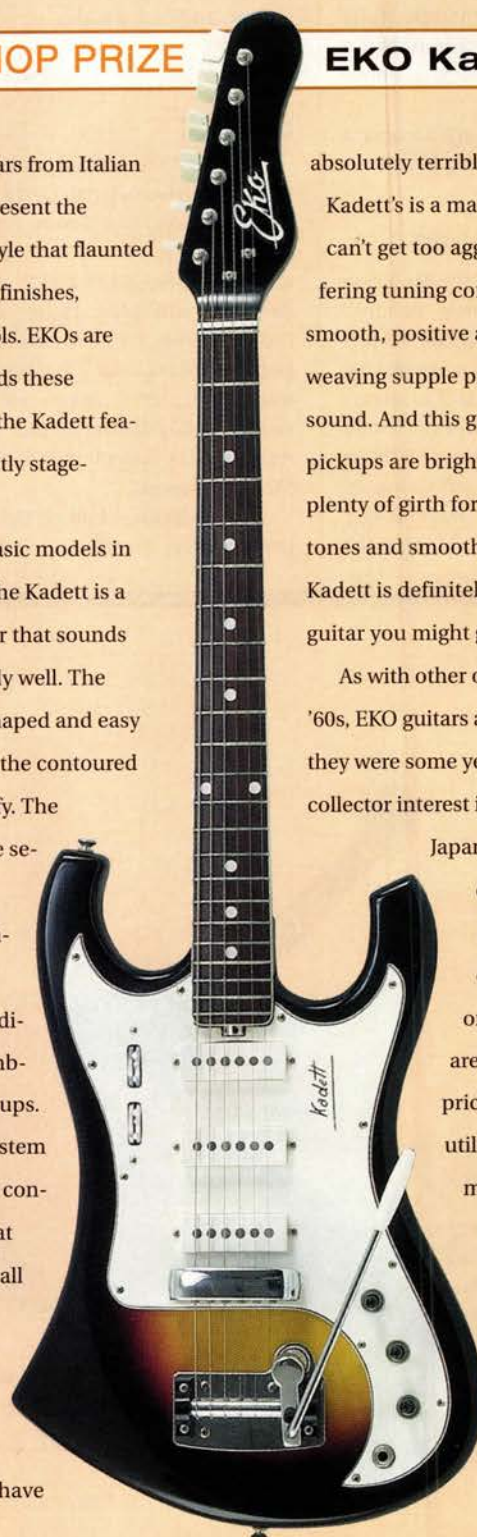
absolutely terrible vibratos, but the Kadett's is a marvel of functionality. You can't get too aggressive on it without suffering tuning consequences, but its smooth, positive action makes it ideal for weaving supple pitch bends into your sound. And this guitar *sounds* great. The pickups are bright and loud, and they offer plenty of girth for big, punchy rhythm tones and smooth, singing leads. The Kadett is definitely more than just a "color" guitar you might grab to spice up a track.

As with other offshore electrics of the '60s, EKO guitars aren't as widely available as they were some years ago. There's a lot more collector interest in vintage European and

Japanese instruments these days, and, as with vintage stompboxes, certain models (typically the flashy ones with lots of buttons) are becoming prohibitively pricey. The Kadett's relatively utilitarian styling and features make it a good candidate for the player or casual collector, and what a deal for the \$300 such an ax would likely fetch today. —ART THOMPSON

Guitar courtesy of Terry

Carleton.





## > LIVE WIRES

### Anthrax

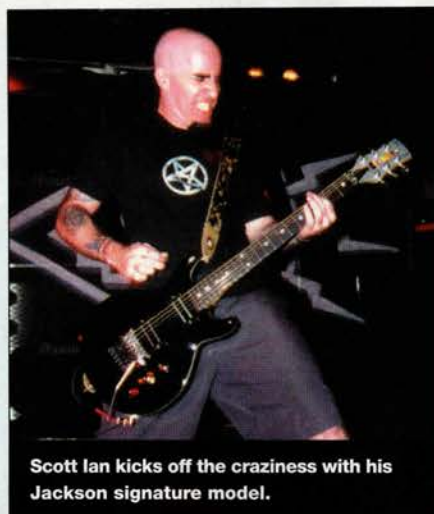
Long before becoming the first heavy metal act to experiment with rap (check out 1987's "I'm The Man"), Anthrax was key in the birth and development of speed metal. And although the band has constantly evolved since its 1981 inception, original guitarist Scott Ian's driving rhythm work has always anchored the group's in-your-face sound. Recently, Anthrax recruited Rob Caggiano to help out in the guitar department (as well as produce the band's ninth, as of yet untitled studio album).

To perform material from Anthrax's two-decade catalog, Ian and Caggiano employ three tunings—D# (D#, G#, C#, F#, A#, D#), dropped-C# (C#, G#, C#, F#, A#, D#), and D (D, G, C, F, A, D)—and both guitarists stock an assortment of arms to accommodate the task. Ian uses five custom-built Jackson Scott Ian Signature JJ model guitars. Three are single-humbucker models with wraparound bridges, and two feature dual humbuckers and Floyd Rose tremolos. All are equipped with Seymour Duncan Custom Shop El Diablo/Scott Ian pickups and DR Tite-Fit Electric strings, gauged .010-.052.

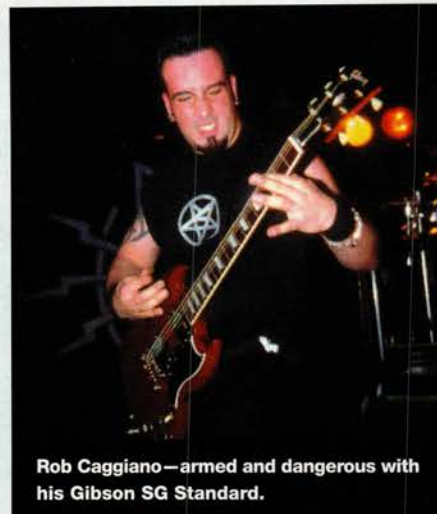
Caggiano uses three ESPs—two Vipers and a Horizon (all loaded with DiMarzio Tone Zone bridge and Air Norton neck pickups)—and a stock Gibson SG Standard. He strings his axes with Dean Markley Blue Steel .010-.052 sets. Both favor Dunlop Tortex picks—.88mm for Ian, and .77 mm for Caggiano.

Ian's guitar signal travels via a Samson UHF Synth Six wireless unit to a rack that contains a Korg DTR-2 tuner, a Rocktron Patch Mate programmable switcher, a Rocktron Hush IICX noise gate, and three pedals—a T.C. Electronic Chorus/Flanger (for clean tones) and a Booster/Line Driver (for dirty sounds), and a DigiTech Whammy II. Ian controls the pedals and the Hush unit with the Patch Mate and a Rocktron Midi Mate foot controller. (The Alesis Quadraverb shown in the rack is no longer in use.)

The output from Ian's Hush unit goes into a Randall Cyclone head (a second is on hand for backup), and the Cyclone's slave out goes into a BBE 462 Sonic Maximizer and a second Hush IICX. The output from the second Hush goes into a SoundTech Audio PL802 power amp, and its stereo outputs feed two Randall Warhead tops that each drive a 4x12 cabinet (loaded with Celestion Vintage 30 speakers) and a 2x15 cab (loaded with 60-watt Jaguars). Rack power is supplied by a Furman PL-8 (amp rack) and a PL-Plus (effects rack).



Scott Ian kicks off the craziness with his Jackson signature model.



Rob Caggiano—armed and dangerous with his Gibson SG Standard.



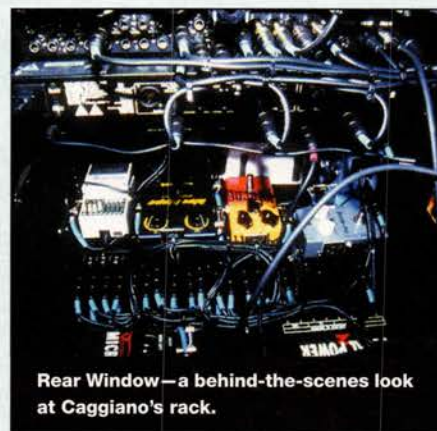
Ian's thumping Randall stacks.



Caggiano's sniper cabs, decked out in camouflage.



Sticker-riddled, but still standing: Ian's effects and amp racks.



Rear Window—a behind-the-scenes look at Caggiano's rack.

Caggiano's signal is sent to his rack via a Nady 950GT wireless system. First in line is a Crybaby DCR-15 rackmount wah (controlled by a remote pedal onstage). The signal is then sent through two Digital Music Corp. GCX Switchers, which provide separate loops for a Korg DTR-1 tuner, Boss DD-3 digital delay and GE-7 graphic EQ pedals, a Prescription Electronics Outbox fuzz/ring modulator, Way Huge Piercing Moose Octifuzz and Blue Hippo analog delay pedals, a Fulltone Fat-Boost, Blackbox Inferno overdrive and Oxygen compressor/limiter/gate pedals, a Voodoo Lab Micro Vibe, and a dbx 1066 compressor/lim-

iter/gate. Regulated power for the stompboxes is provided by a Voodoo Lab Pedal Power unit. An onstage GCX master foot controller is used to regulate the GCX Switchers—which are used to control effects (except the Crybaby) and change amp channels. Caggiano uses a Bogner Überschall for his main tone, and a Marshall DSL100 as a power slave. Each head drives two Marshall 1960BV 4x12 cabinets loaded with Celestion Vintage 30s. Rack power is furnished by a Furman PL-Plus.—LISA SHARKEN

*Thanks to Brian James for providing technical information.*



# TOOLBOX\*

> > > ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

## FRETWIRE\*

Sugimura, who helmed the company for 16 years, started at Takamine in 1963 in the accounting division. . . . **TWO GIANTS SHAKE HANDS:** Roland Corp. recently announced a minority investment in **Fender Musical Instruments Corp.** that is intended to fortify an already long-standing relationship. The two manufacturing juggernauts were already associated when Roland introduced the GK pickup, and Fender subsequently offered "Roland-Ready" Stratocasters. . . . **GOOD AS GOLD:** When **Mudvayne's** *L.D.50* was certified gold for selling more than 500,000 copies, the band, their label (Epic), and their representative, Tom Muzquiz, were kind enough to send a "thank you" gold record to our sister publication, *Rumble*. *Rumble* was the first major-market guitar mag to put Mudvayne on its cover—and we're glad to see others caught on to their coolness. Thanks to Epic, Tom, and the band for thinking of us! . . . **VINTAGE**



The *Rumble* staff (from left to right): Ali Zeigler, Michael Molenda, Deirdre Jones, Shawn Hammond, and Emily Fasten.

**BARFLY GUITARS:** What do you do with a 500-year-old slab of mahogany that spent 50 years as the bar at a historic watering hole? Turn it into a guitar, of course! The



"I decided when I was going to play guitar that I would play it as well as I could, and as well as anyone playing," said Burrell in the March 1970 *GP*.

## > HEROES Kenny Burrell

**S**tudio musicians don't usually make great solo artists—and vice-versa—but the distinguished career of studio/jazz giant Kenny Burrell proves that a guitarist with the right stuff can successfully wear both hats. Born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1931, Burrell grew up in a musical family, and, as a child, was first attracted to tenor sax. After hearing Charlie Christian, however, Burrell set his sights on becoming a professional guitarist. By age 20, he was sitting in regularly with Dizzy Gillespie's band, and turning down offers to go on the road—choosing instead to study music theory, composition, and classical guitar.

Upon graduating from college in 1955, Burrell was hired by pianist Oscar Peterson—a gig that brought him to New York City, where he would begin his career as a studio player and perform on *hundreds* of records between 1957 and 1963. In fact, he was so in demand that he had to take refuge as a Broadway pit musician in order to find time to work on his own music.

"When you do regular studio work, you're like a doctor who's always on call," Burrell told *GP* in 1981. "The hours are so uncertain, and

it's difficult to say 'no' to anybody because you may be one of their favorite people. I found that working in the pit gave me the time I needed to get things together."

Burrell's breakthrough came in 1963 with the highly acclaimed Blue Note release *Midnight Blue*, which gave him bandleader status and the freedom to concentrate on his solo career. During his most productive period between 1963 and 1970, Burrell forged a soulful instrumental style that showcased his cool, bluesy phrasing and melodic inventiveness.

As the late Tal Farlow once said of Burrell: "He's unique—I can spot his playing anywhere. His chord conception is wonderful, and you're always aware of the harmonic movement in his work—particularly in his single-string solos."

Starting in the early '70s, Burrell became involved in jazz education, leading seminars, and eventually creating a course at UCLA called Ellingtonia (which focused on the music of Duke Ellington) that he teaches to this day. Burrell also remains an active player. Last year he released his 87th solo album, the appropriately titled *Lucky So and So* [Concord Jazz].

—ART THOMPSON



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## > LEARNING CURVE *Shred Guitar Manifesto*

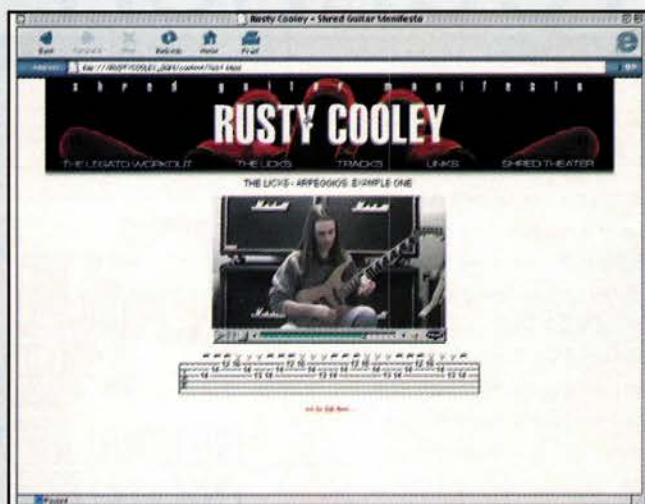


All right, metal heads, it's time to torture your fingers with the ligament-stretching lessons of the *Shred Guitar Manifesto* CD-ROM. The brainchild of monster technician Rusty Cooley, *Manifesto* offers Internet browser-based video lessons (powered by RealPlayer) in two main sections: "The Legato Workout" and "The Licks."

You can view the two as one continuous video via the "Shred Theater" link, or as individual sections that let you advance at your own pace, as well as pick and choose your subject matter.

"The Legato Workout" consists of 32 hammering exercises that range from a simple half-step routine to knuckle-busting, four-notes-per-string drills that spread your fingers across eight frets. "The Licks" section, on the other hand, offers 50 mind-boggling licks and arpeggios that cover every square inch of the fretboard. In addition to licks and workouts, two of Cooley's original instrumental tracks are included so you can hear how he throws all this insanity into an actual tune.

*Manifesto* bummers manifest themselves in only a couple of ways. First off, the CD-ROM apparently wasn't created with the Mac operating system in mind, so there are some minor glitches here and there for Mac users. For example, when you click on a specific lick or workout example, the screen flickers in strobe-like fashion until you



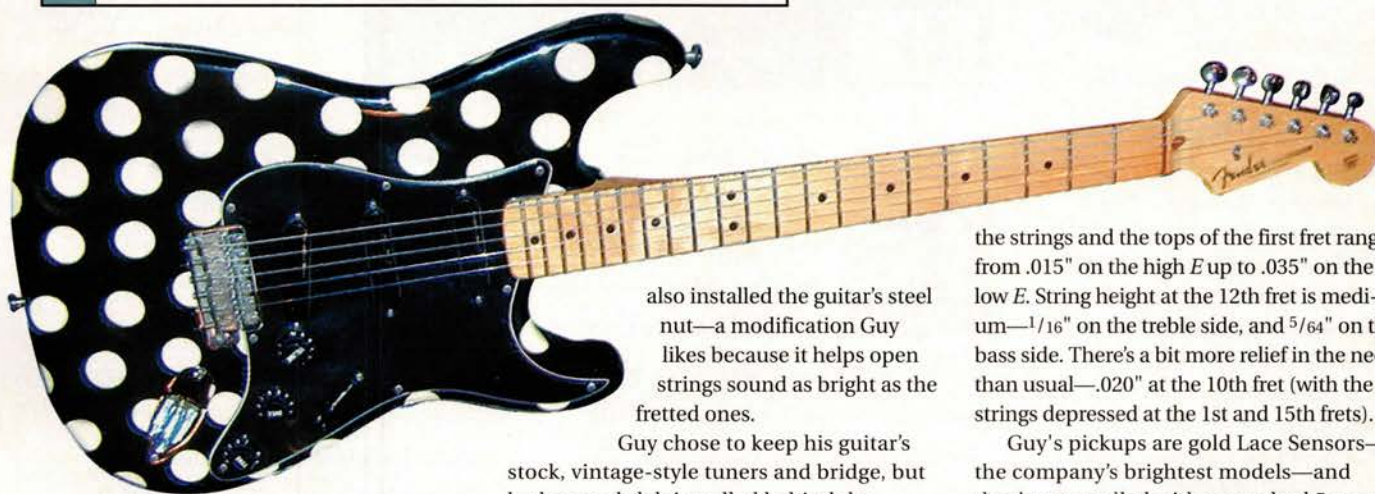
hit RealPlayer's onscreen play button. Also, navigation is slightly tricky, because lick and workout example menus disappear as soon as you select a track.

Overall, *Manifesto* is a great tool for rockin' Rambos for whom no lick is too demanding or painful. Cooley also deserves kudos for providing verbal explanations that are clear enough for you to follow the lessons using nothing but your guitar and a CD player.

Chops from Hell, Box 1191, Hays, KS 67601; chopsfromhell.com.

—SHAWN HAMMOND

## > SETUPS OF THE STARS *Buddy Guy*



Buddy Guy's big buddy onstage is the vintage-reissue Strat built for him by Fender master-builder Larry Brooks. It's hard to miss with its black body and white polka dots—not to mention its striking, lacquered-maple neck (which Guy likes for its bright sound). The guitar's very large .115"x.048" frets (carrying battle wounds from being hit with drumsticks) are perched atop the finish, adding even more high end. The frets were installed by Chicago luthier Bob Gorney, who

also installed the guitar's steel nut—a modification Guy likes because it helps open strings sound as bright as the fretted ones.

Guy chose to keep his guitar's stock, vintage-style tuners and bridge, but had a wood slab installed behind the tremolo block to keep the bridge resting flat on the body. He has instructed his guitar tech, Mark Messner, to put as many winds of string around the tuners as possible. Guy prefers his strings be changed once a week because he likes how they feel and sound once they're broken in. However, his high-E string gets changed more often because it tends to break.

For a vintage-style guitar, the neck width is standard, at 1<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>", and the distance between

the strings and the tops of the first fret ranges from .015" on the high E up to .035" on the low E. String height at the 12th fret is medium—1/16" on the treble side, and 5/64" on the bass side. There's a bit more relief in the neck than usual—.020" at the 10th fret (with the strings depressed at the 1st and 15th frets).

Guy's pickups are gold Lace Sensors—the company's brightest models—and they're controlled with a standard 5-way pickup selector and volume control. Added to this are a TBX tone control (which Guy normally keeps in the center position) and a 25db mid-boost preamp—which lets Guy drive any amp setting into a frenzy. Guy usually plays with the neck and middle pickups, but he switches to the bridge and cranks the preamp when he really wants to cut through the mix. His strings are custom-gauge Ernie Balls: .010, .012, .015, .028, .038, .048.

—GARY BRAWER, brawer.com



# TOOLBOX\*

> > > ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

## FRETWIRE\*

first guitar made by Ed Roman from the original bar of the Old Absinthe House in New Orleans (frequented in the past by the likes of Mark Twain, Oscar Wilde, Robert E. Lee, Frank Sinatra, and even Jimmy Page) is an Epi-  
phone-style electric now owned by New York-based Mooney Suzuki guitarist Graham Tyler. Roman plans to get two more guitars out of this storied block of wood, so click to [edromanguitars.com](http://edromanguitars.com) for more info. . . . **ROCKING**

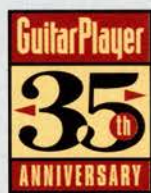
**TOWNSVILLE:** The Cartoon Network and Schecter Guitars have teamed up to bring us the limited edition Powerpuff Girls Daisy Rock guitars. On April 26, during Cartoon Cartoon Friday, 100 of these little cuties will be given away. Two versions of the guitar were made—one featuring all three of the crime-fighting gals, and one showing their evil nemesis, Mojo Jojo. These rockin' collector's items are also available in limited numbers at [cartoonnetwork.com](http://cartoonnetwork.com). . . .

**KISS MY BUSTIER:** On February 5, **Kiss** played many rock bands' dream gig—a lingerie show for women's retailer Lane Bryant—as part of New York City's annual Fashion Week. Though not open to the public, a Web cast of the scantily clad models strutting their stuff to the rumbling of the Gods of Thunder was available on Lane Bryant's Web site ([lanebryant.com](http://lanebryant.com)) the next day. Unfortunately, there were no sightings of Gene Simmons dressed up in a teddy.

—EMILY FASTEN



## > MY FAVORITE GUITAR PLAYER Jerry Donahue



don't have a clue how to get a break, and in some cases they don't even care—they only care about playing well. I hadn't heard of anyone in that issue except Danny Gatton and Scotty Anderson. I'd seen Scotty at a NAMM show before, and I became aware of Danny around 1976, when I was in Joan Armatrading's band. We played this club called The Cellar Door in Georgetown, Maryland, and Bill Holland from the opening band invited me over and played me some of Danny's live al-

bums—which just blew me away. What an amazing player! To think that he could have remained unknown for so many years—from '76 to '89—is pretty incredible. It was great of you guys to bring the focus to him.

"There are some great stylists that are mainstream, but the guys who knocked me out the most were always relatively unknown—and they weren't just tremendous and innovative players, they were pretty humble guys, too. If you tried to pay Danny or Scotty a compliment,

they'd always turn it around. A lot of the big 'heroes' who think they're really something have about a quarter of the talent of some of these unknown guys.

"It was also a real treat to read about Jean Bosco Mwenda from Zaire and Ernest Ranglin from Jamaica. Then there was the guy who influenced Henry Kaiser—Elliot Inger, who played with Frank Zappa and Captain Beefheart. Henry said Elliot played the best solo he'd ever heard—it made him go out and buy his first guitar the next day! Unfortunately, Elliot ended up working as a mailman in L.A. It's just so sad that guitarists who provide so much inspiration could miss out on the recognition they deserve."

—JERRY DONAHUE, FEBRUARY, 2002





## > PERFORMANCE NOTES Steve Kimock

**O**ver the last 25 years, jam-band guitarist/lap-steelist extraordinaire Steve Kimock has flaunted his jazz/rock/world-beat improv style alongside such legends as Bruce Hornsby, Bob Weir, Henry Kaiser, Warren Haynes, and Trey Anastasio. Kimock was even anointed by no less a jam icon than Jerry Garcia, who shortly before his death identified Kimock as his "favorite unknown guitar player."

—SHAWN HAMMOND

**You've been on the road forever—what's the biggest lesson you've learned about gigging?**

I used to get ready for gigs by working on parts for a song, or by trying to get an overall plan for everybody to follow. But I've found that really doesn't work, because if you're too emotionally invested in your plan, you freak out as soon as things don't go your way—even if what's

happening is really cool.

**What type of planning do you mean?**

Well, I might have spent all week listening to B.B. King's instrumental album, *Unexpected*, while the rest of the band was listening to *Bitches Brew* or the Chemical Brothers. So I go into the gig thinking, "I'm going to do this really cool blues thing tonight." I just screwed myself with the mental game right there, because I'll probably have a terrible night while everyone else is on the same page.

**Is that true for people who aren't in a jam band?**

Absolutely. For magic to happen, you have to be flexible. Most of the time, your plan is going to be something puny and personal that doesn't take into account all the great things that can happen on a gig. Playing with a band is so chaotic that any arbitrarily small thing can blow up and have a giant, really cool result.

## \* STUDIO LOG



### Tracking "Good to Me"

**Album:** *Lapalco* [Star Time] by Brendan Benson.

**Parts:** Rhythm guitars

**Guitarist:** Brendan Benson

**Guitars:** 1965 Epiphone Casino, 1959 Guild Aristocrat, Gibson Country Western acoustic

**Amps:** A Supro with a 6"x9" speaker for the Epiphone, and a 1963 Vox AC30 with Bulldog speakers for the Guild. "There's only one way to set Supros—all the way up," says Benson. "I doubled the Epiphone Casino track with the Aristocrat/AC30 setup, and I ran the AC30 a little cleaner than the Supro."

**Effects:** "Some Sony multi-effect rack piece for reverb," says Benson.

**Tuning:** Standard

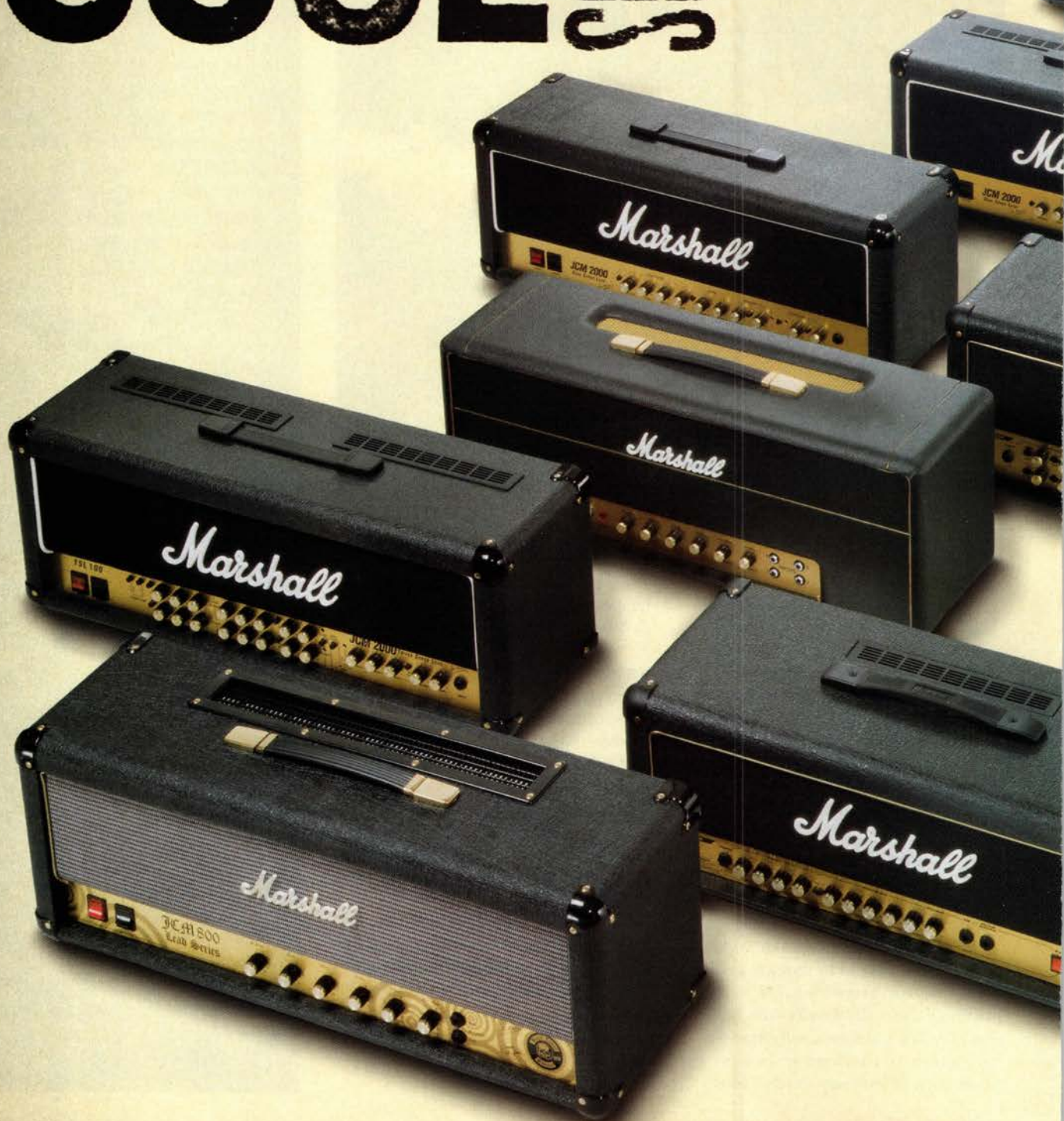
**Recording Medium:** Alesis ADAT XT (set to 20-bit resolution) and 1" analog 8-track. "I like the limitations of working with fewer tracks," says Benson. "You have to put so much more conviction into what you play, because you don't have the option of layering a bunch of stuff over the main tracks. I tracked the drums, bass, and vocals on the analog deck, and I recorded all the guitars on ADAT. It was really tough getting the two machines to sync together, and I wasn't happy with the sound of the ADAT—it was too glassy. Analog tape sounds more like a living, breathing thing to me."

**Creative Concept:** "I don't think I could've changed the chord progression if I had tried," states Benson. "I never heard the song any other way. I wrote it on acoustic, and even though I didn't set out to sound like the Kinks, the song reminded me of the vibe on *The Village Green Preservation Society*. I love that about it."

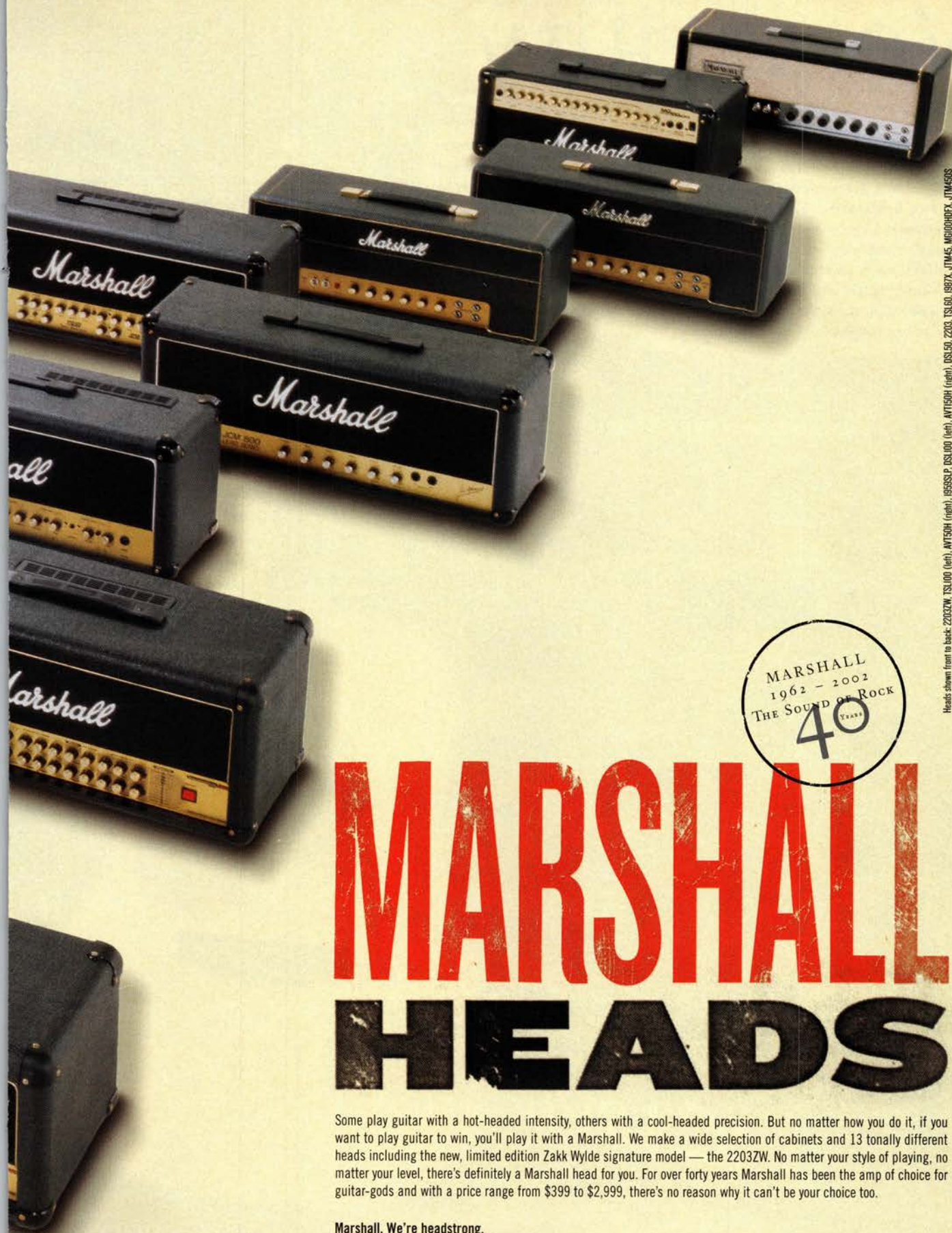
—MATT BLACKETT



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-Jamie Rio, Gig Magazine

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# The Word

Robert Randolph & Luther Dickinson's Joyful Noise



"The pedal steel is a *feel* instrument, says Randolph (right, Dickinson is left). "Feet, knees, arms, fingers—everything is moving at once. You have to constantly be in the flow, and if you stop practicing, you *will* be terrible."

By Andy Ellis

**T**he fat, soaring sounds Robert Randolph draws from his 13-string pedal steel on *The Word* [Ropeadope Records] herald the arrival of a major new talent. The 24-year-old New Jersey native started playing steel eight years ago in the House of God Pentecostal church. Now, as frontman for The Word, Randolph is the first soloist from the "sacred steel" tradition to leave the sanctuary of a worship service to per-

form in the devil's den of smoky nightclubs and rock ballrooms.

"He's going to be a superstar," vows guitarist Luther Dickinson, whose grooving North Mississippi Allstars double as The Word's rhythm section. "Robert reminds me of Bob Marley. He has a whole belief system—and all the literature and folklore that goes with that—to back up his music. He's one of the best combinations of soul and technique I've ever

heard—and I'm a connoisseur."

Randolph's wailing, burnished tone recalls Duane Allman, but he attacks his steel with the ripping ferocity of another late, great 6-stringer. "When I started playing steel, I wanted to become the fastest player and do lead licks like Van Halen," says Randolph. "But then someone gave me a Stevie Ray Vaughan cassette, and that *completely* changed my whole approach. For months, I had know idea

who he was or what he looked like. I just thought, "Wow, I've got to try to play like this." When I got his *Live at the El Macombo* video, I flipped. You can see people falling out from his passion. I still watch it almost every day."

Though he began on a 6-string Oahu lap steel, Randolph quickly made the shift to a pedal-equipped instrument. "I got a beginner 10-string with three pedals and one knee lever," he says, "and I began to research different



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## The Word

tunings. When I moved to a 12-string pedal steel, I thought I had it all there, but I was missing something. So I came up with a crazy 13-string tuning [B, E, G#, B, E, E, G#, B, D, E, G#, D#, F#]. The unison pair of Es in the middle helps me get a more rockish sound."

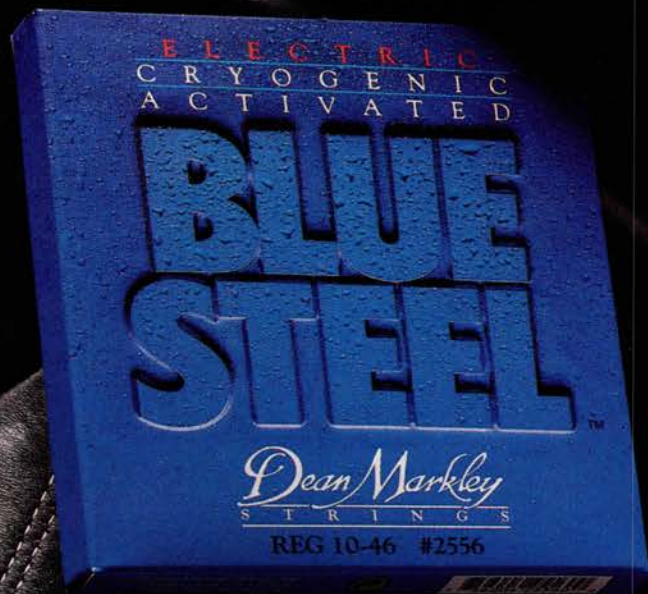
Vermont luthier Jerry Fessenden built the first of Randolph's three custom 13-string steels. The second and third models were made in Texas by Carter Steel Guitars. Randolph is currently touring with his newest steel—an S-13 model Carter with seven pedals and six knee levers, a custom Bill Lawrence pickup, and a bold yellow-and-black mica finish.

Like other sacred steelers, Randolph has an active bar hand. In pursuit of a shivering melody, for example, he'll often dart up and down his strings rather than creep across them in the classic country style. "Nashville pedal steelers don't pick up the bar," details Randolph. "They roll it on the strings and block unwanted notes with their picking hand. But sacred steel players are taught to *lift* the bar when shifting positions. So, like Dobro players, we use a grooved bar—not a big round one."

Unlike traditional steelers, Randolph embraces effects. He uses an EBow and a Dunlop CryBaby to generate eerie, vocal-like sounds,







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## The Word

and, occasionally, he activates a Goodrich Steel Driver III fuzz box for extra grind.

A raw, funky mix of percolating organ, screaming steel, whining slide (played by Dickinson), spanky rhythm guitar, and super-tight bass and drums, *The Word* features 11 instrumental renditions of classic gospel tunes. As Dickinson explains: "We borrowed several songs—'Joyful Sounds,' 'Without God,' 'At the Cross,' and 'Call Him by His Name'—from *Sacred Steel*, the first compilation album to feature House of God players. You know how sometimes you'll buy a record that really changes your life? That's the way *Sacred Steel*

was for me. I learned the songs from the CD, but Robert learned them from the guys. He has a direct, deep connection to this tradition, and the audience can feel it. It's exciting to see people go nuts when he plays."

Gigging with Randolph has changed the way Dickinson approaches his 6-string. "The backbone of House of God music is a driving rhythm guitar," he says. "I'm used to laying back when I accompany someone—that's what a soloist usually demands, right? But Robert likes it scratchy, syncopated, and *loud*. He'll look back onstage and yell, 'C'mon—turn it up!' He has inspired me to dig in when I play rhythm."

When Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, and Sam Cooke stopped performing in church to pursue

professional careers, they took heat from some members of their congregations. Randolph has also experienced such criticism.

"I hear it all the time," he says. "'Come back and play for the Lord.' But playing to secular audiences has given me a chance to connect musically with different races and people. I look forward to going full-scale with this, and performing for audiences in Japan and China. Our church music—the sacred steel tradition—has been hidden for too long. I'm just trying to spread what the founders of this music have been doing all these years."

## Luther Dickinson on Peavey's Solid-State Mojo

"Last year, I was having problems with new tube amps constantly breaking down," says Dickinson, "but then Robert turned me on to these old, solid-state Peavey combos—the Special 112 and Special 130. These were amps I always looked down on, but they have the best loud, clean tone. On *The Word*'s first tour, I was playing through two half stacks—a Peavey 5150 II and a really nice Trace Elliot Speed Twin—but Robert's solid-state Peavey Nashville 400 and Renown 400 shredded my sound every night. One day, we were hanging out at a music store in Pittsburgh, and Robert suggested I buy an old, black-panel Peavey Special. I've been playing it ever since. I installed a new Peavey Black Widow speaker, and the amp is a monster. I even like the distortion—I set the EQ for some midrange boost, and with a Les Paul, the sound is creamy as can be. Now I'm collecting Specials."

—AE

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# KORG



# Monte Montgomery

## Full-Contact Acoustic Guitar



"I run my guitar so hot onstage that if anyone else tried to play it, it would probably explode in their hands," says Montgomery.

By Jude Gold

Austin, Texas, has once again unleashed a phenomenal guitar slinger on the world. This time, however, the trouble comes on acoustic guitar.

"I don't play electric because I don't *have* to," explains Monte Montgomery, Austin's most exciting lead-guitar export since Stevie Ray Vaughan and Eric Johnson. "An acoustic guitar is much more alive, and the whole thing makes sound—not just the pickups. I can tap, hit, and bang

on it, and, because it's hollow, I can get it to feedback exactly the way I want."

Until earlier this year, Montgomery had never even been to the West Coast. But his soulful rock songs, soaring solos, and mesmerizing live shows are quickly winning him a nationwide fanbase. In fact, when Montgomery was getting ready to hit the road in support of his new album, *Wishing Well* [TMG], a group of faithful followers known as the Montiacs pitched

in their own money to help him lease a tour bus. This wasn't the first time someone had lent a hand to support Montgomery's musical career.

"When I was real young, I'd sit in my mother's lap and we'd both hold the guitar," he remembers. "She would fret the chords with her left hand, and I'd strum them with my right. My mom is kind of a folksinger and a gypsy, and when I was a teenager, we literally lived in the back of an old Chevy pickup with a camper

shell on it. We'd play all these hole-in-the-wall places around Austin, and she'd keep the paper money from the tips jar and give me the change. I was living and breathing guitar."

After his mother, Montgomery's next big influence was Lindsey Buckingham. He would fall asleep listening to 8-track tapes of Fleetwood Mac and Buckingham Nicks looping until dawn. Soon, he discovered other finger-stylists—such as Mark Knopfler and Bruce Cockburn—and his



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## Monte Montgomery

impassioned attack evokes every great player he has ever loved. He slaps the neck like Michael Hedges, taps Van Halen-esque false harmonics, soars melodically like Eric Johnson, and strums with the brutal conviction of SRV.

"I developed an ear for picking things off records, and that's how I learned," says Montgomery. "I was never really a 'practicer.' I just played all the time."

Like many musicians, Montgomery began his pro career playing cover tunes on the happy-hour circuit in restaurants and bars. He quickly became unfulfilled, however, and committed himself to performing original material as a solo-guitar act. Eventually, he built enough of an audience that he could afford to assemble a band.

As Montgomery's popularity expanded, so did his sound. These days, he plugs his piezo-equipped Alvarez DY62 into a rig that includes an Ibanez Tube Screamer, a Boss CS-2 compressor, a Boss tremolo, a Hughes & Kettner Rotosphere, and a T.C. Electronic Chorus/Flanger. The T.C. sends a stereo signal to an ART Dual MP tube microphone preamp. The ART's XLR outputs carry Montgomery's sound to the P.A., while the 1/4" outs feed two cranked Trace Elliot TA-100s. The blaring amps make Montgomery's side of the stage a dangerous place to hold an acoustic guitar.

"I'm also running tons of compression," he

says, "which makes things even more volatile. I have to do a lot of muting with my right hand to keep unwanted strings from going berserk, because, at that volume, the guitar wants to blow up. It's a beast. And I've really abused that guitar. I used to drink too much and leave it in the car overnight—just asking for somebody to steal it. The next day, it would be baking in the 100-degree Texas heat. That Alvarez has had more repairs done on it than any acoustic ever should. The neck has been rebuilt and the cedar top splintered—which required the addition of a maple pickguard and regular coats of clear epoxy."

The Alvarez's life in the studio has been less dangerous, but Montgomery has put the guitar through some changes in the search for the perfect recorded tone. On his first two albums—*1st and Repair* and *Mirror*—he experimented with mic positions (even to the point of setting ambient mics outside doorways) and plugging the Alvarez directly into the recording console. For *Wishing Well*, he abandoned mics entirely, ran a direct signal into Pro Tools, and processed the tracks using the Vox and Marshall models of Line 6's Amp Farm plug-in.

Back onstage, the Alvarez punishment is definitely R-rated violence. For half-step dives, Montgomery bends the neck so drastically that it's painful to watch. To close his shows, he often throws the guitar down, leaving it to writhe in its own feedback. But of all the guitar's tortured components, it's the D'Addario strings that have it the worst.

"When we're ending the last song, I literally rip the strings off one at a time with my bare hands," explains Montgomery. "I grab the low E, pull until it snaps, and then I move on to the higher strings. It's chaos. The guitar is howling like a wolf—even without any strings—because the compression is still going. Then I just walk away. This all started one night after three or four encores—it was the only way I could get off stage."



"My Alvarez is super quiet—unplugged," says Montgomery. His Trace Elliot amps and stomp-box arsenal change all that.







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# Jucifer

## Amber Valentine Takes the Low Road

By Michael Molenda

If you see Jucifer in concert—or pop in their latest CD, *I Name You Destroyer* [Velo-cette]—and don't immediately realize there's no bass guitar in the mix, cut yourself some slack. Your senses have simply been duped by the mammoth roar of guitarist Amber Valentine. Armed with an '80s custom Dean V and a backline that would intimidate Kiss, Valentine unleashes thundering riffs and panoramic rhythm tracks that camouflage the fact all the noise emanates solely from herself and drummer Ed Livengood.

"My ideal guitar sound is massive and resonant, with plenty of sustain and a bit of dissonance," says Valentine. "I like to hear strings vibrating, floors rattling, and air moving. Ed and I love bass-heavy music. We're extremely sensitive to high-end sounds—they disturb us when they're too prominent in the mix."

To construct her colossal slabs of beefy guitar tone, Valentine runs her 5-string Dean (she deletes the high-*E* string) into a Boss OS-2 Overdrive/Distortion, and then daisy-chains a fleet of bass and guitar rigs, as follows: '80s Crate bass head and Peavey 2x15 cabinet, Marshall JCM900 Lead Series head and Marshall 4x12 cab, Acoustic Model 450 into a homemade 2x12, Peavey



"We are not the White Stripes!" says Valentine, referring to that other male/female duo.



## Jucifer

TMAX bass head into two Ampeg 1x15 cabinets, Marshall 9100 Dual Monobloc and an Ampeg 9x10, and, finally, three additional Acoustic Model 450s and a Sunn Concert Slave feeding two Ampeg 4x10s and four Ampeg SVT 8x10 cabinets.

"The madness started when soundmen would mix the drums and vocals really loud, and then put this tiny, tiny guitar in the mix," explains Valentine. "The initial reason for all the amps was to ensure the guitar blasted into the club, but then it became an addiction. Now it takes so long to set up everything that we never have enough time left to soundcheck. I've got a stadium setup without the crew!"

While Jucifer's minimalist approach to band members is certifiably unconventional, Valentine says the group's evolution was simply a matter of dealing with the situations that were handed to them. "Originally, Ed played bass and we had a drummer," she relates. "But the drummer quit, so Ed took over the drums. Then we practiced and searched for a bassist, but when we finally found a great player, he completely changed the dynamics of the band in a way we didn't like. We had to deal with another ego, another songwriting voice, and another person to round up for rehearsal. By that time, my playing had evolved to be self-suf-

## Valentine on the Sex thing

"W"omen—as well as men with good intentions—often segregate women into this separate category of female musicians," says Valentine. "For example, I'll often hear someone say, 'We're an all-girl band and we rock.' It's great for females to say that, but whether a band rocks or not should have nothing to do with gender. I think it's degrading to women that three girls can form a band and they'll immediately get noticed more than three guys doing the same thing. That's just as bad as men getting better pay for doing equal jobs." —MM

ficient—I could play melody and rhythm simultaneously—so we decided to risk it with just the two of us. Now, I like being in a duo because it forces me to step up and be a better player. In a conventional band, if you make a mistake, it might be covered by the mix of instruments. When I blow it, however, everyone knows. I can't just let a chord ring and take a drink of beer."

A creative benefit of the band turning perceived limitations into a singular style is that the Jucifer sound is vastly different from typical rock radio fare—a trait Valentine realizes can be as much a curse as a blessing. "The industry has little faith in anything new," she says. "The theory is like those old 'imposter' ads for designer perfumes: 'Hey, if you like Limp Bizkit, you'll love band X.' There are so many copies of past styles now—in film, fashion, decor, and music—that I often wonder if this era will ever have its *own* character. Musicians need to convince the industry there's a market for originality. After all, the acts who've been the biggest the longest—such as the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan—were strange when they first came out. They weren't copies of whatever else was popular. It's distressing to see the easy success of people who take the copycat path, but I like being able to sleep at night knowing I haven't compromised myself." ■

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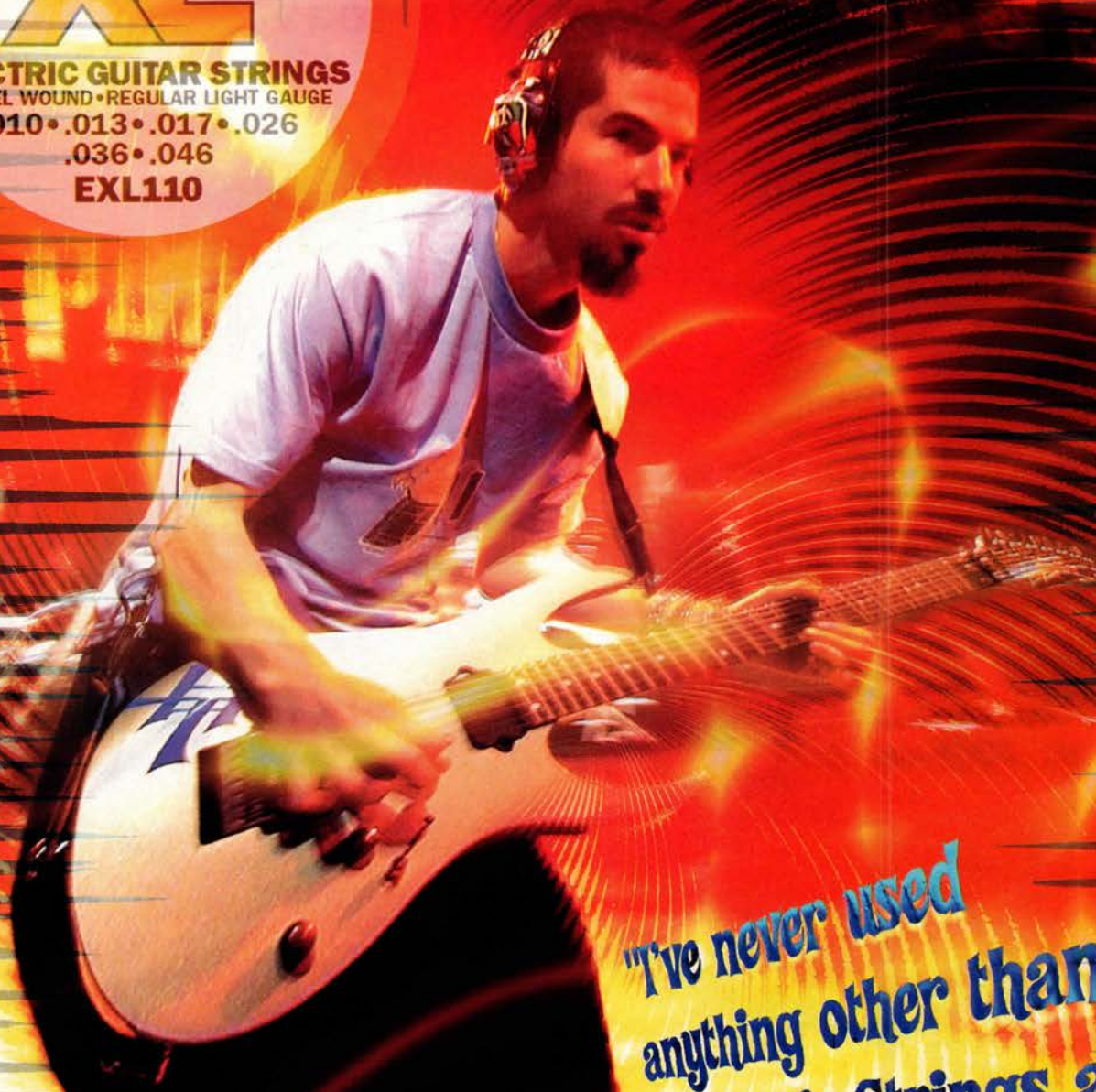
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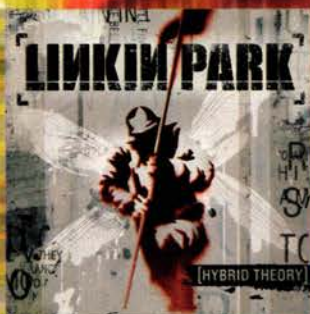


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# Rev. Horton Heat

## The Gospel According to Heat

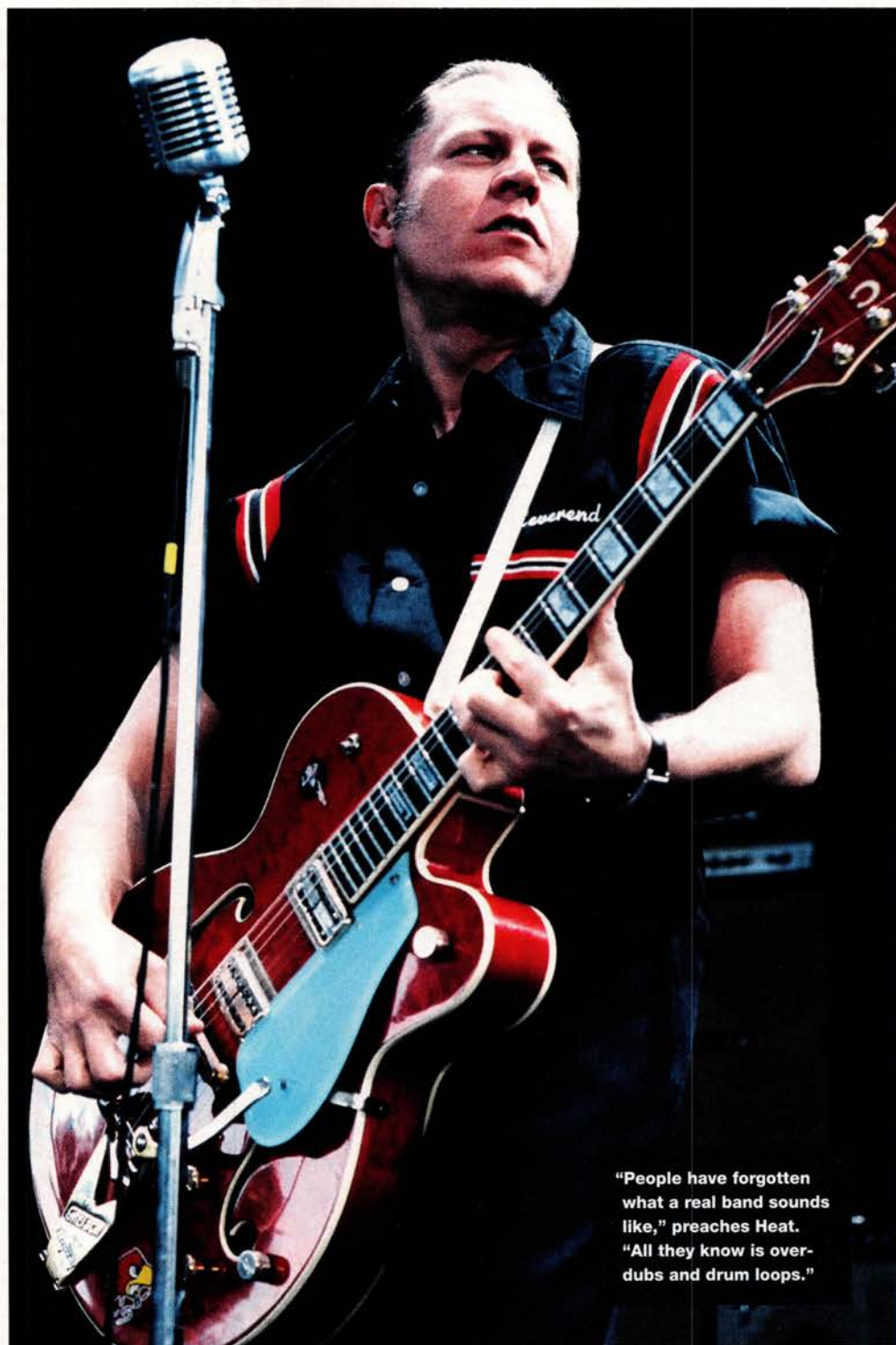
By Darrin Fox

**"W**e usually practice once a year," deadpans the Reverend Horton Heat from his rehearsal space in Dallas, Texas. "And we just finished our second session in a week. I'm not sure *what's* going on."

What's going on is Heat is preparing his trio to tour in support of his latest revved-up rockabilly platter, *Lucky 7* [Artemis]. "This is the first record we've done where most of the songs we cut were already in our live set," he explains. "Usually we don't gig them until they've been recorded. But doing it this way made choosing the songs for the album easy. We already knew what would get a good crowd response."

Since the mid '80s, Heat's unique brand of aggressive rockabilly has proven impervious to trends. He has thrived through hair metal, grunge, and whatever else is the *genre du jour*. Much of his staying power is due to the fact he's that the real deal. Heat captures the very essence of rockabilly's dangerous sound, and he does it his way.

"I don't have much interest in trying to make our albums



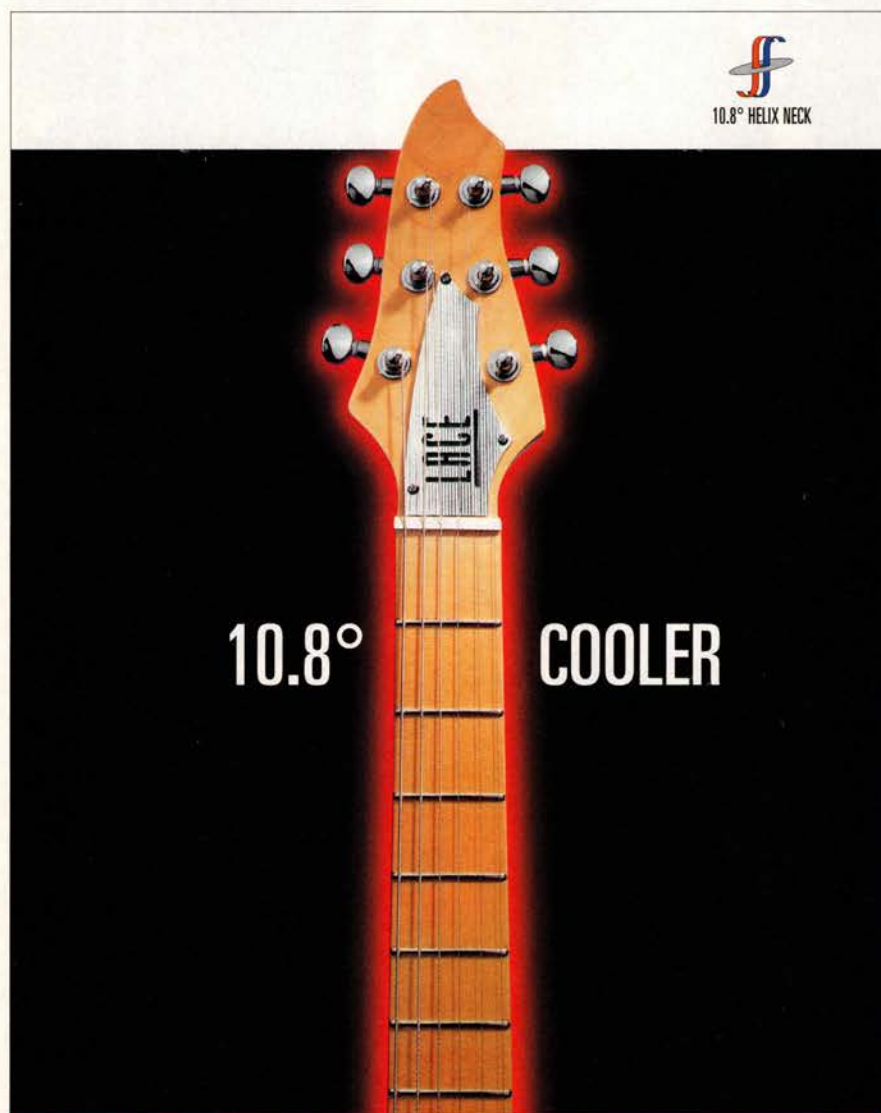
"People have forgotten what a real band sounds like," preaches Heat. "All they know is overdubs and drum loops."



## Rev. Horton Heat

sound like Sam Phillips was in the studio recording us," says Heat, referring to the legendary Sun producer who recorded classic Elvis and Jerry Lee Lewis sides. "Our first album was recorded live to 2-track—just like the old days—and I think there is something to be said for recording that way. But if you're going straight to 2-track, you usually focus all your attention on getting a great vocal take, and the band's performance is a lesser priority. Now we record live, but only to get solid bass and drum tracks. We'll keep other stuff if we can, but I have no moral problem with over-

**"When I saw Jerry Lee Lewis and his wild energy, it all made sense," says Heat. "This is what rock and roll is about, and this is what I need to be doing."**



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dubs. I suppose I 'should' track all the guitars live, but in the grand scheme of things, no one cares."

To record *Lucky 7*, Heat used the rig he has relied on for nearly a decade. His Gretsch 6120 reissue is routed to an Ernie Ball volume pedal, and then to a Chandler echo that splits his signal to two amplifiers: a silverface Fender Super Reverb and a Fender Vibro-King. Heat also runs a Boss Blues Driver in front of his Vibro-King for "a crunchy, metal-type sound."

Although Heat has always been an accomplished player, *Lucky 7* has some moments that surprised even the Reverend himself. His skill and facility on the instrument have grown, as evidenced by his cascading fingerstyle licks ("The Tiny Voice of Reason") and his hot-rod Tele-fest on the instrumental "Show Pony." Whereas many players would play the "inspiration" card and credit divine intervention for improving their music, Heat knows *exactly* why his playing leaps out and grabs you by the throat on *Lucky 7*.

"Before we started recording the album, I made a concerted effort to shore up my theory chops and learn a ton of new stuff on the guitar," he says. "I sat and learned from Brent Mason, Albert Lee, and Chet Atkins videos. I've been really interested in the thing that Chet did where you take lines and play them with a combination of fretted notes and open strings. Learning that stuff just proved to me that if you think you know everything about playing guitar, you're basically telling everyone you don't know *anything*. I've also been working a lot with Stefan Grossman's Vestapol tapes—everything from Blind Blake to Merle Travis. Man, without Stefan Grossman, all of those licks and styles would be gone forever."

Although Heat has been working overtime on his chops, he doesn't really care if he wows people with his guitar skills. "I get a lot of compliments, and that's always nice," he says. "Sometimes it gets under my skin when I see guys being glorified and I know in my heart I can play circles around them. I can't get too upset, though. There are guys who are worse than me who get more acclaim, but there are guys who are a lot better than me who don't get nearly the love I get."

Perhaps it's his sense of history and heritage—plus a healthy dose of open-mindedness—that allows Heat to thrive in any musical climate. In fact, rather than being some old-school technophobe, he views the digital revolution as roots music's biggest ally.

"I remember when I was beginning to dig into rockabilly in the late '70s," explains Heat, "and Gene Vincent records were going for \$75! Now all that stuff is on CD so young guys can go out and get *every* Gene Vincent song and *every* Johnny Burnette song. Today, all the classic stuff I love is so much more accessible." ■



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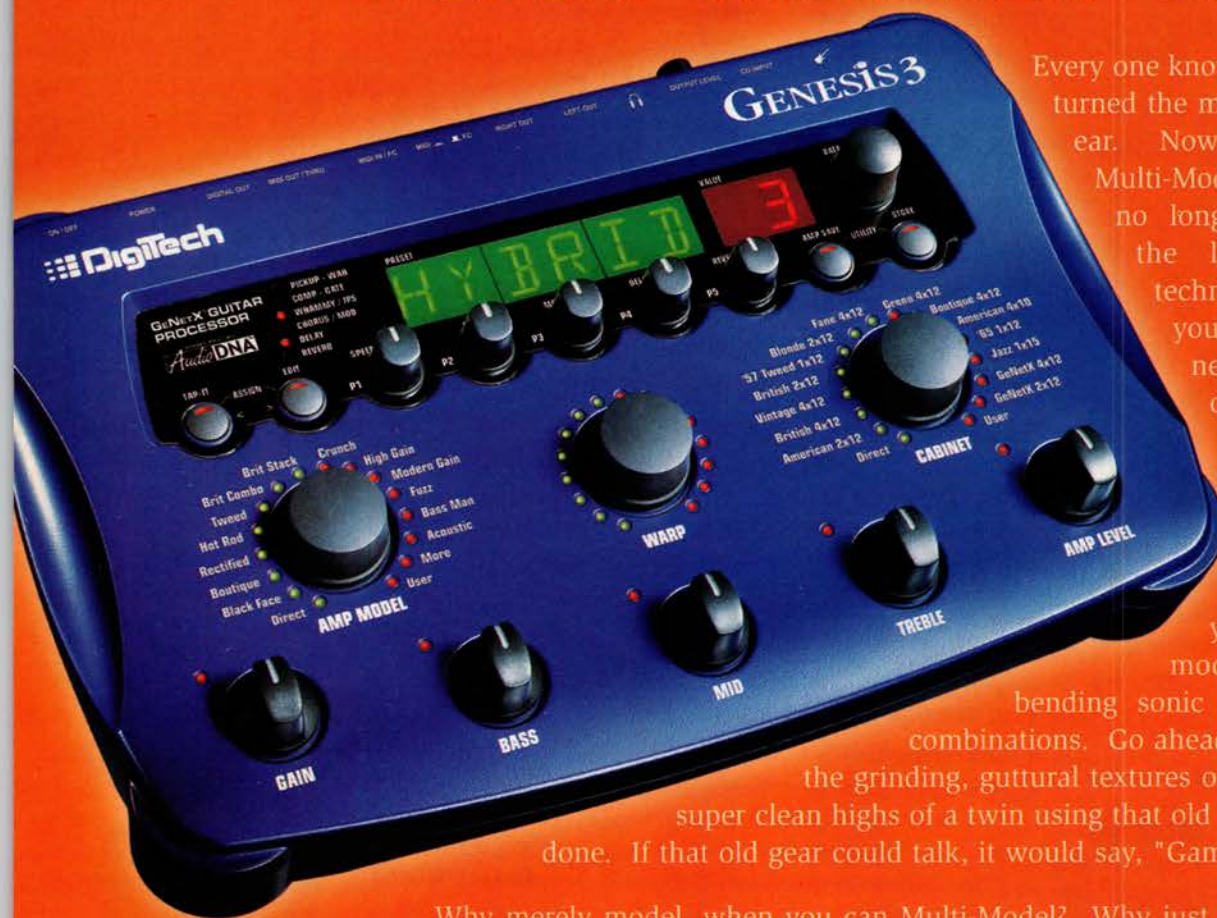


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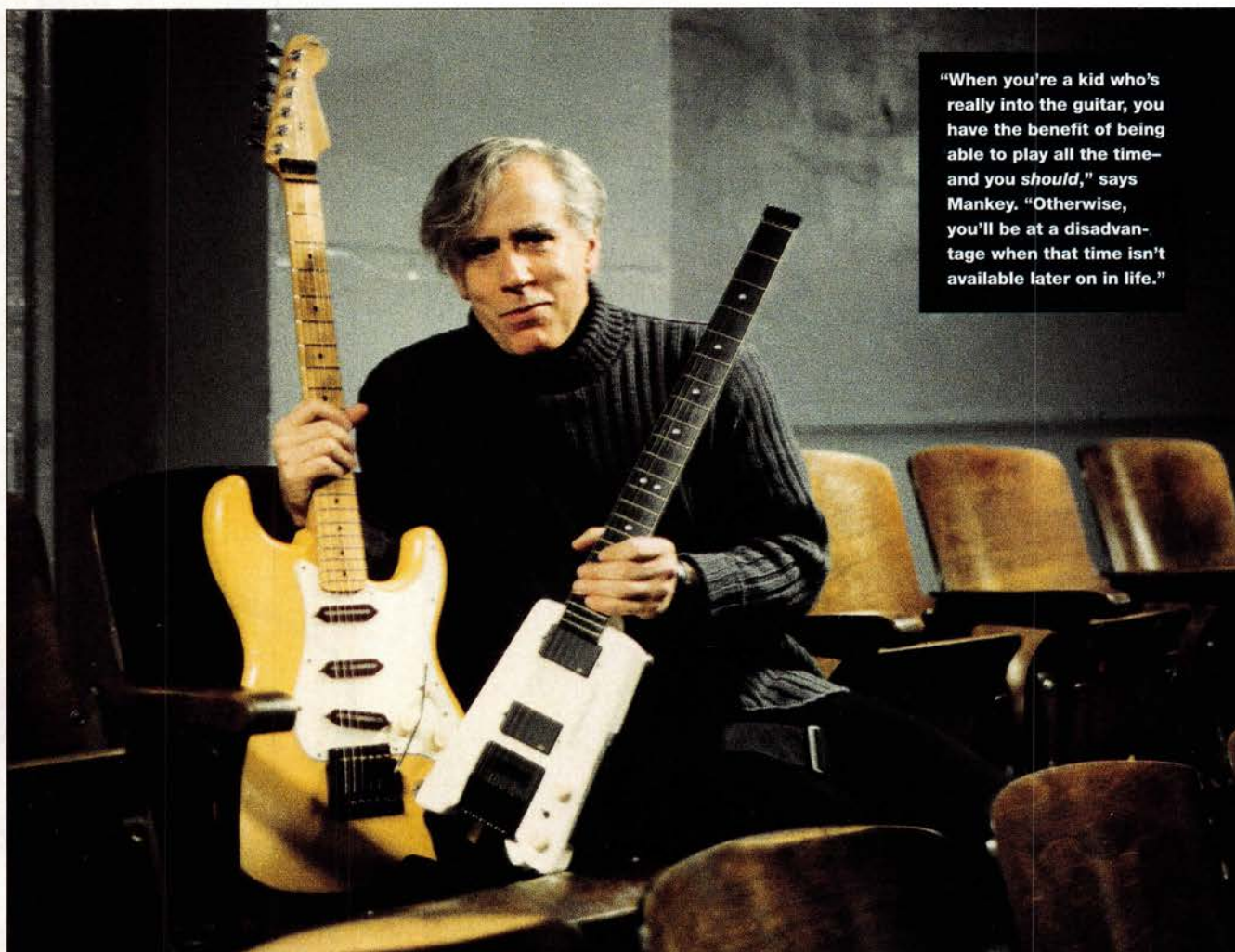
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# Concrete Blonde

## Jim Mankey's Minimalist Potpourri



"When you're a kid who's really into the guitar, you have the benefit of being able to play all the time—and you *should*," says Mankey. "Otherwise, you'll be at a disadvantage when that time isn't available later on in life."

By Christian Wissmuller

"I'm not one of those guys who gets onstage and rips off killer leads that impress the girls," says Concrete Blonde's Jim Mankey. "I prefer working in the studio where I can think about what I'm doing more. When everyone's looking up at me during a concert, I'm afraid I'm going to screw up."

Stage jitters aside, *Group Therapy* [Manifesto]—Concrete

Blonde's first album in seven years—shows that Mankey can still crank out the rock-solid rhythms and distinctive lead lines that helped make the group college-radio darlings in the late '80s. His unique fretwork continues to incorporate elements of rock, country, Goth, and punk, and most of the genre blending is accomplished with a single instrument.

"My primary guitar is a yel-

lowish '70s Strat," details Mankey, who occasionally plays a Steinberger. "The Strat is one of those dreaded three-bolt-neck models that everyone says are so terrible, but I just love mine. In fact, I was looking for a spare once, and I tried every Strat at the Hollywood Guitar Center, but not one approached the sound of my guitar. When I first started playing shows, I owned a Gibson SG that I really banged on to make all

these noises. Later, I decided to rein myself in a little bit, and the Stratocaster was a good match for me because you can't move your hand too much or you'll knock the volume down."

The rest of Mankey's setup is also pretty bare bones. His live rig includes a Marshall JCM2000 DSL100 head driving a Hiwatt 4x12 with Celestion Vintage 30s, as well as Boss compression, fuzz, and delay pedals. Even



## Concrete Blonde

within the tonal playhouse of the studio, Mankey keeps the gear quotient light.

"I usually make heavy use of a tweed Fender Deluxe and a Vox AC30," he notes. "But for *Group Therapy*, I mainly used my childhood Fender Super Reverb. When I was 14, I got a summer job just so I could buy that thing, and it's still going strong. Most of the effects were laid to tape using the same stompboxes I bring onstage. I also used a Maniac Electronics Sustainiac Model B—which attaches to the headstock of my Strat and actually vibrates the guitar—to create some very cool feedback textures."

Other distinguishing textures finding their

way onto *Group Therapy* include the nylon-string parts that grace "Your Llorona." "I love flamenco music," states Mankey, who used a Gibson Chet Atkins electric nylon-string to record the track. "In fact, the last time I really locked onto a particular guitarist was when I discovered the Gypsy Kings some years ago. That's not really my style of playing, but I still prefer the round, full sound of a nylon-string guitar for acoustic work."

Although Mankey's signature style is a study in contrasts—sometimes it's controlled and precise, and other times it's reckless and visceral—he says the key to his approach is actually very simple. "I never really know what to say when people ask me how I get my sound," he admits. "Ba-

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**"My father and brother started me playing," says Mankey. "My dad gave me *Hum and Strum with Chet Atkins*, and my brother gave me *The Silver Beatles Book of Hits*."**

sically, I've always just followed the advice my older brother [noted indie producer] Earle gave me when I was a kid. He said, 'Just listen to what's coming out of the guitar and the playing will follow. It's like riding a dirt bike—if you concentrate too hard on the mechanics, you'll get screwed up and take a spill.'"

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# INTRODUCING VOX WHAT A MODELING

## WHEN WE SET OUT TO CREATE VALVETRONIX, THE GOAL WAS CLEAR:

design a modeling amplifier that sounded and felt great. A versatile amp that could superbly re-create every detail and subtle nuance of a collection of the world's most sought after guitar amplifiers.

We realized that reaching this goal wouldn't be easy. That it would require top-notch digital technology plus a tube power amp capable of modeling the power amp sections of a ton of classic and modern tube amplifiers. We knew it would take more than our own guitar amplification expertise. We also needed the skill and experience of a high-tech equipment innovator. From this need the collaboration between VOX and Korg's ToneWorks division was born.

Together, VOX and ToneWorks have created Valvetronix—the ultimate, hybrid digital modeling amplifier that sounds, feels and operates like a traditional tube amp. The 60 Watt 1 x 12 AD60VT and stereo, 120 Watt 2 x 12 AD120VT sound just like sixteen of the finest classic and modern tube guitar amps—with no compromises or excuses.

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The preamp sections of the AD60VT and AD120VT Valvetronix combos rely on Korg's proprietary REMS™ technology (Resonant structure and Electronic circuit Modeling System). REMS accurately replicates the complex circuitry in each of the modeled amplifier's signal paths, re-creating the exact tonality of those amps. Even their unique tone-stack networks have been reproduced precisely, ensuring that the Valvetronix' tone controls interact exactly as the ones on the amps they're modeling.

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VOX's Valve Reactor technology enables the new AD60VT and AD120VT to produce the high dynamic range associated with traditional tube amps—something most solid-state power amps

simply can't do! And, because their output power can be configured exactly the same as the amps they're modeling, the AD60VT and AD120VT also do a better job of capturing the sound and feel of the amps being modeled.

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The 21 effects in the AD60VT and AD120VT aren't an afterthought. Each one is a carefully crafted model of one of a variety of coveted classic and popular effects. These include 10 stomp-box models that appear before the amp models, driving the preamp in the same way they would in a traditional setup.

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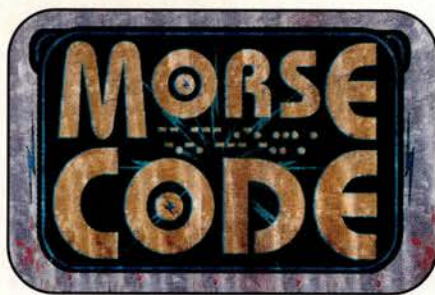
## Steve Morse

### Deciphers His Jaw-Dropping Approach to the Guitar

At first, Steve Morse's career seems like a series of unrelated incidents. After all, he was a jazz-guitar major at the University of Miami, but his principal instrument was classical guitar. He went on to form the Dregs—one of the most revered fusion groups in history—but then he quit the music business and took on jobs such as baling hay. > > >

By Darrin Fox





Unable to stay away from music, however, he formed the Steve Morse Band and released two classic albums: *The Introduction* and *Stand Up*. Those records show why Morse continually swept *GP*'s Readers Polls. His style—a seamless blend of classic-rock riffs, Baroque melodicism, and country chicken pickin'—kept hordes of guitarist inspired and humbled by his musicality and unbelievable chops.

In the latter part of the '80s, Morse became a sought-after bandmate. He took a gig with a reformed version of Kansas, but, after a couple of albums, he split the music business *again* to work as a pilot for a commercial airline.

True to form, Morse returned to what he loves. He continued writing and recording with the Steve Morse Band, and, in 1995, he joined Deep Purple—a collaboration that continues to be a resounding success, both artistically and financially.

But while Morse is far from predictable, a closer look at his 25-year career reveals that he is a man with a plan. And he has fabulously succeeded at consistently churning out a stellar body of work on his own terms. Morse's new solo release, *Split Decision* [Magna Carta], is the latest piece of his professional strategy, and it will delight his fans with transcendent performances and yet *another* shift in perspective.

.. . . . .

*How does Split Decision differ from your previous solo releases?*

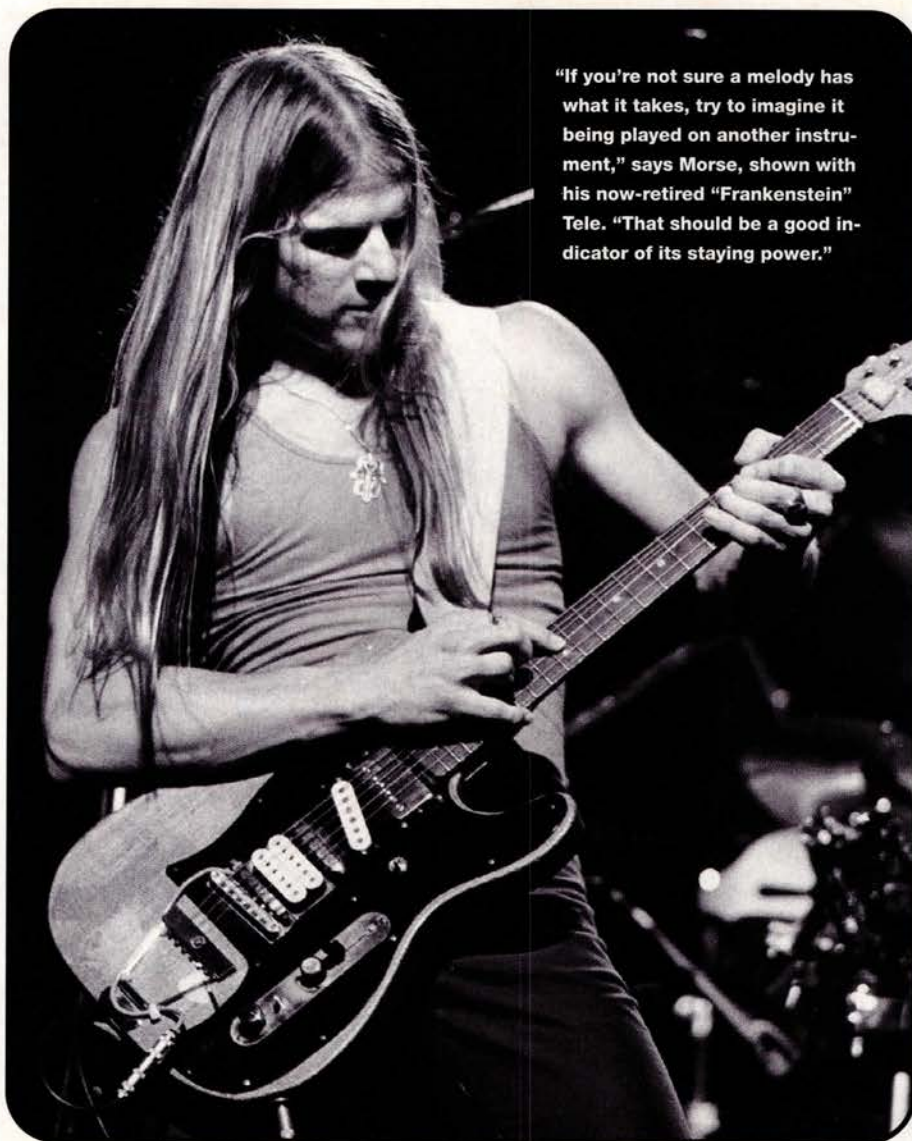
I approached *Split Decision* with a different mindset. On past records, I used to think in terms of, "I need a soft tune, I need a rock tune, and I need an acoustic tune." On the new record, I just let everything fall where it may, and I didn't worry about it.

*Why is that?*

Years ago, a record company guy told me my records were *too* predictable: a classical piece, a country piece, a shuffle, and then a long epic. I guess I had so much variety there that was *no* variety anymore [laughs].

*Do you have a philosophy when it comes to composing?*

My philosophy has always been the same: Try to write each piece of music from a different perspective. For instance, the tune "Busybodies" on *Split Decision* was born out of wanting to make an exercise that was pure counterpoint. I said to myself, "Stay within this format of a



"If you're not sure a melody has what it takes, try to imagine it being played on another instrument," says Morse, shown with his now-retired "Frankenstein" Tele. "That should be a good indicator of its staying power."

counterpoint exercise, but keep it melodic." Other times, it could just be as simple as saying, "I wrote the last tune on classical guitar, I won't pick it up and write on it again until I write a tune on electric."

*Do you still play a lot of classical guitar?*

Yeah. It's great when I have a quiet moment—which isn't very often with telephones, computers, televisions, and kids.

*What did studying classical guitar do for your electric playing?*

It enabled me to not only physically gain the skill of playing more than one melody at a time, but also to *imagine* more than one melody going on at one time.

*How much of your playing is pure improvisation?*

I don't know how many of my solos are different each night. I'm not even sure how to judge that. I know there are similarities in a lot of things I play, but when I try to double an improvised line in the studio, it's often really difficult. That tells me that, although the lick may be a part of my vocabulary, it isn't *so* much a part

of my playing that the phrase instantly falls under my fingers.

*How has your style evolved?*

I've made vast improvements with my phrasing. I think I've become a little more patient—emphasis on "little" [laughs]. As the years go by, I feel I've gotten more melodic, and I've gained more confidence in my improvising.

*Do you still practice a lot?*

Yeah, I feel best when I can get in at least a couple of hours a day.

*A long time ago, I read that you actually practiced while you drove your car.*

I still do on long drives. I've gotten good at it. I can navigate a slalom course driving with my knees.

*Is your practice regimen a mix of composing and working on chops?*

Right now, I'm getting ready to tour with Deep Purple, so my practice consists of exercising and working my hands out. No matter how much you prepare, though, when you get up onstage that first night, you're never quite ready for how different it is than practicing.



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How has the Deep Purple experience affected your solo work?

The biggest effect Deep Purple has had on my solo career is that the band is so busy I've

had to pass on a lot of solo opportunities. For example, I've been offered to go out on the G3 tour, but I can't plan far ahead because Deep Purple is always on the road. Deep Purple is my full-time job. When I have time, I do the solo stuff.

*Do you ever regret that?*

It has to be that way. As a professional guitarist, you have to put something first. You can't just say, "Well guys, I'm in the band, but if the tour is in September, I can't do it."

*When you're onstage, it seems you still get enormous pleasure from the guitar.*

Playing live is the payoff for all the work I do. It's beautiful to forget about everything and just let a solo happen. I've always enjoyed the feeling

of saying, "Okay, here I go," and just taking off. That's one reason I love playing with Deep Purple. They let me branch out—in fact, they encourage it. The more it's different from last night, the more they laugh and enjoy it.

*Do you ever listen to live tapes and critique your playing?*

I'm unusual in that I don't like to listen to myself play. Part of the reason is I don't want to lose that naïveté and enjoyment by being too critical of my playing.

*What gear did you use for Split Decision?*

I used a variety of stuff. I ran my old Ampeg V4 and a Marshall 25/55 head through a JBL-loaded Marshall 4x12. I like the JBLs because they're articulate, and they hardly break up at all. I also used Peavey 5150 and Carvin Steve Vai Legacy heads. The Legacy sounded real good when I used it to layer different sounds in the mix. On a few tracks, I mixed in a Line 6 Pod. To me, the sound of the Pod isn't pleasant enough to stand on its own, but it does add a presence that I couldn't get by miking an amp. Other than my Ernie Ball, the only guitars I used were a Steinberger 12-string and a John Buscari-no classical guitar.

*Do you ever pull out your old Frankenstein Tele?*

No. It hit the end of the line when the fretboard got too thin from all the refretting. I retired

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Photos Marty Tenme





it instead of rebuilding it and having it feel totally different.

*How many of those Frankenstein elements were transferred to your Ernie Ball guitar?*

The first and most important aspect carried

over from my Tele was the pickup placement. That's why the guitar only has 23 frets—with 24, the pickups are too close together. I like the pickups spread apart so they have a drastically different sound.

*Were you skeptical that you could replace your Tele with that guitar?*

Yeah. I knew I needed to work with a company that was willing to throw a lot of guitars in the trash. I wasn't designing the guitar for other people—I wanted something that worked for me. Not necessarily unusual things, but features that aren't intuitive for a lot of guys accept me. For example, I have a 3-way switch instead of a 5-way, so I can get from one setting to another faster—I'm not into carefully moving the switch

to the in-between positions.

*You left the music business twice in your career. What made you come back?*

I really re-discovered how difficult it is to work a "straight" job. It's even tougher for someone who has music going in their head all the time. Even though I was truly sick of the music business, I realized there are business problems in everything you do. You can't escape it.

*Do you think people get as energized about the guitar now as they did 20 years ago?*

I don't think people's tastes have changed that much. They want variety, they want to see something unusual, and they want to feel passion played out by real human beings in front of them—whether it's a play, a band, or someone jumping over ten buses on a motorcycle. People want to see something that's not the same as their job.

*For a player who thrived in the heyday of the guitar hero, you seem remarkably at peace about the era's passing.*

I'm just glad that there's still guitar music out there. I can really identify with the young-man-angst-and-stress music. I mean, that's what I played when I was that age—actually, that's how I feel a lot of the time now. But how can I be bitter? There are still clever songs being crafted on the guitar, and we should all be glad for that.

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"Rockabilly was—  
and still is—black and  
white music coming  
together. It's that  
up-tempo feel with  
the guitar borrowing  
from the blues."  
—Carl Perkins,  
shown circa 1957.





# ROOTS ROCK PILGRIMAGE

REVISIT THE PIONEERING  
RIFFS OF SCOTTY MOORE  
AND CARL PERKINS

**T**he ruckus we call rock and roll began in a storefront studio at 706 Union Avenue, in Memphis, Tennessee. Bored with the big-band music of the day, engineer and radio announcer Sam Phillips started Memphis Recording Service in 1950 "to make records with some of the great Negro artists" he'd heard perform locally. ■ Ike Turner, B.B. King, and Howlin' Wolf ► ► ►

BY ANDY ELLIS



# ROOTS ROCK PILGRIMAGE

made their first records at Memphis Recording Service, and while their blues mojo was the real deal, Phillips knew most white teenagers weren't ready for such uncompromising sounds. The wily producer desperately wanted to find a hillbilly singer who could reflect some African-American heat and cash in on the massive—but yet untapped—crossover potential. His prayers were answered in July 1954, when a nervous 19-year-old named Elvis Presley showed up to audition for Phillips' fledgling Sun Records.

Phillips drafted two studio pros—electric guitarist Scotty Moore and upright bassist Bill Black—to accompany Presley's jangling acoustic guitar for the

audition. When the trio launched into an impromptu version of Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup's "That's All Right," streetwise blues lyrics collided with a hopped-up country beat, and musical history was irrevocably altered. Moore's syncopated picking and twangy double-stops were a perfect foil for Presley's jumpy vocals. Between July '54 and July '55, Presley and crew recorded some 30 tracks, and, in the process, Moore blazed a trail for a new generation of pickers. As Jeff Beck put it, "The Elvis stuff was the real start of it. That was the rocket ship taking off for a whole bunch of us."

It didn't take long for this "hillbilly blues beat" to conquer the airwaves. But it was songwriter and ace guitarist Carl Perkins—not Presley—who gave Phillips his first million seller. In 1956, a few months after Phillips had sold Presley's Sun Records contract to RCA Victor, Perkins topped the pop,

country, and R&B charts with "Blue Suede Shoes." A triple-chart hit was unprecedented, and though Perkins' career was derailed by a near-fatal auto accident, he became a rock-guitar pioneer.

In this lesson, we'll explore quick, easy ways to emulate the twitchy vibe that Moore and Perkins unleashed at Sun Records in the mid '50s. You can use these early rockabilly moves in a variety of settings, including up-tempo blues, swampy R&B, and honky tonk. For an authentic Sun Records sound, you'll need echo, but these licks work equally well *sans* effects.

## MELODIC RHYTHM RIFFING

Moore was a consummate accompanist, and the arpeggiated riffs he draped over Presley's manic flat-top in "That's All Right"

helped fill out the music without being intrusive. "I wanted to play something that would complement the song and the singer," said Moore. "That's what people still have such a hard time doing, and that's really all I ever had in mind. Merle Travis and Chet Atkins were my idols, but I couldn't play with my thumb and fingers, or duplicate note-for-note what they were doing. I would take a little phrase—blues, country, whatever—and turn it around to make it fit something I was trying to do. I tried to keep a rhythm going and nose on in with stabs here and there. I wasn't thinking about creating a new style."

Inspired by Moore's cool comping and sense of economy, Ex. 1a reveals an essential hillbilly blues trick: Rather than play five- or six-string dominant-7th voicings, pare the harmony down to three notes. Because the dominant-7th formula (1, 3, 5, ♭7) specifies a minimum of

Ex. 1a

♩ = 96-126 (V) E7 (IV) D7 (I) A7

Ex. 1b

♩ = 96-126 (V) E7 (IV) D7 (I) A6

Ex. 1c

♩ = 96-126 (V) E7 (IV) D7 (I) A7





four tones, we must selectively drop one note from each voicing. For example, in bar 1, sketch E7 by juggling the 1, 3, and ♭7 (E, G#, and D). In bar 2, similarly abbreviate D7—only this time, wrangle the 3, 5, and ♭7 (F#, A, and C). For bar 3's A7, again use the 3, 5, and ♭7 (C#, E, and G), but in a new order.

As you play through this example, scan the melodic movement on each string. Notice how when we shift from E7 to D7, two lines ascend, while one descends. Moving from D7 to A7 reverses the process: Two lines descend, while one ascends. Such *contrary motion* is a by-product of tight voice-leading.

In Ex. 1b, we shift to a lower position and repeat the chord-trimming process using a slightly busier picking pattern. We encountered bar 1's grip in the previous example, but bar 2's D7 is a new shape consisting of 3, 5, and ♭7 (F#, A, and C). In rockabilly and swing, it's common to use a major 6 for the I chord, as we do in bar 3 with A6.

Ex. 1c borrows grips from Examples 1a and 1b to create yet another variation of the V-IV-I cadence.

These three examples are highly concentrated. Once you've sussed the different voicings and picking patterns, try spinning

# SLAPBACK!

**AS**

Brian Setzer says, "You've got to have a slap on there for a rockabilly sound." While it's hard to pinpoint who was the first to use slap echo, the jittery sound was immortalized by Sam Phillips and Sun Records artists in the early '50s. Originally, slap echo was produced in the studio by using a second reel-to-reel tape machine to conjure the signal delay, but you can cop the vibe using today's digital delays.

Start by setting the delay time. Slapback echo spans a range of about 50 to 500 milliseconds (a half second). Settings from 50ms to 100ms create a quick jolt, and you'll hear a distinct repeat at settings above 125ms. The key is to experiment until you find a setting that sits well with the song's tempo.

For an authentic Sun Records stutter, you want a single echo—which means setting your delay repeat knob (also called feedback or regeneration) to 0. Using the mix control, make the echo prominent, yet not quite as loud as the original signal. Finally, to better emulate a tape machine, roll off the echo's high end. The original note should sparkle and the slap should sound a bit wooly. Some digital delays—such as Line 6's DL4 Delay Modeler—let you go one step further by adding a hint of pitch wobble (to simulate a tape deck's inherent wow and flutter) and distortion (to suggest tape saturation).

—AE

complete 12-bar progressions in the key of A using different combinations of the chords and rhythms shown here. Keep it simple—imagine that you're adding harmonic sophistication to a churning acoustic guitar and clicky, slapped upright bass. Observe the *let ring* markings and use a hybrid pick-and-fingers attack—flatpick, middle, and ring

fingers on the third, second, and first strings, respectively.

We get even more melodic in Ex. 2, which dances through a series of dominant-7th and major-6th voicings to create another V-IV-I progression in A. Even with this increased activity, the voicings stay compact—we're sketching each chord using only three strings. It's a timeless sound that

stretches from Sun Records through early Beatles covers, and into such contemporary alt-country heavies as Lucinda Williams.

## ROLLIN' DOWN THE TRACK

Many early rock classics—including "Mystery Train," which

Ex. 2

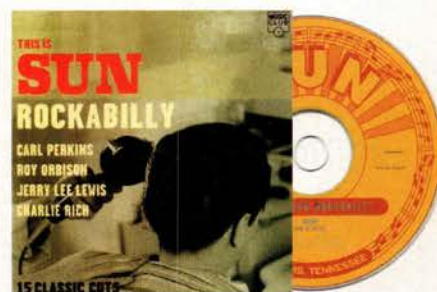
♩ = 100-120

(V) E7 E6 (IV) D7 D6 (I) A7 A6 A7

Ex. 3a

♩ = 104-126

(I) E





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# ROOTS ROCK PILGRIMAGE

some fast vibrato in beats 3 and 4.

Let's work with the 6- $\flat$ 3 tritone in another context. The next three licks illustrate how to slip it into bluesy phrases in the key of A. Tape the harmony—or have a friend play the changes—so you can hear the tritone stinging the A7.

A I-IV phrase, Ex. 6a is derived from Perkins' "Blue Suede Shoes." We begin with the tangy 6- $\flat$ 3 tritone (F $\sharp$ -C), toy with the  $\flat$ 5 (E $\flat$ ), stretch the 4 (D) slightly while

holding the 6 (F $\sharp$ ), and finally anticipate the IV (D9) by playing its  $\flat$ 7 and 9 (C and E).

Ex. 6b is inspired by figures Perkins played in "Gone, Gone, Gone." The skanky 6- $\flat$ 3 tritone dominates bar 1, while bar 2's A6 offers a hint of cowboy swing.

## GET DOWN

To play roots rock, you have to have some cool, deep-twangin' bass-string riffs at your fingertips. In December 1954, Presley recorded numerous takes of "I'm Left, You're Right, She's Gone." The alternate takes featured the simple, yet soulful line in Ex. 7a, played

by Moore. Here we're riffing against an E chord—jump one string-set higher, and you'll have an A riff. Hot dog!

To drive his pulsing "Matchbox," Perkins played the boogie moves in Ex. 7b. This was in 1955. Two decades later, Billy Gibbons would rework these ideas for such ZZ Top rockers as "Heard It on the X." See how the threads connect?

Inspired by riffage Perkins played in his '55 smash, "Honey Don't," Ex. 7c is an essential bass-string passage. It's a V-I move here, but you can easily build a complete I-IV-V groove from these four measures. To cover A7 (the IV), simply jump the fingering in

bars 3 and 4 up to the fifth and fourth strings. Keep it clean, make it swing, observe the slides, and lay on some hearty slap echo. For variety, try palm muting.

## CUNNING CHROMATICISM

We'll close with a cool tribute to Buddy Holobaugh, who played the wicked guitar licks in Warren Smith's 1956 Sun Records hit,



Ex. 6a

$\text{♩} = 126-152$   
Rockabilly swing

(I) A7 (IV) D9

Ex. 6b

$\text{♩} = 126-152$   
Rockabilly swing

(I) A7 A6

Ex. 7a

$\text{♩} = 88-96$   
Rockabilly swing

(I) E

w/ palm mute B1/4

Ex. 7b

$\text{♩} = 144-168$   
Rockabilly swing

(I) A7

w/ palm mute B1/4 B1/4 B1/4 B1/4

Ex. 7c

$\text{♩} = 138-168$   
Rockabilly swing

(V) B7 (I) E7

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# ROOTS ROCK PILGRIMAGE

"Rock 'n' Roll Ruby." Ex. 8 illustrates how Holobaugh suggests major-6th chords by using relative minor triads.

It works like this:  $F\#m$  ( $F\#$ ,  $A$ ,  $C\#$ )—the relative minor of  $A$ —contains the 6, root, and 3 of  $A6$  ( $A$ ,  $C\#$ ,  $E$ ,  $F\#$ , or 1, 3, 5, 6). It's easier to fret a minor triad than a full major-

6th chord, yet you get all the important notes—*hip*. Just remember this mantra: When you need to play a major 6, try fretting its relative minor triad instead. (You'll find the relative minor lurking three frets below any given major chord.) For  $D6$ , play  $Bm$ ; for  $G6$ , play  $Em$ , and so on. This trick works best when you're playing with another harmonic instrument, and you've got the high part.

In addition to the major 6/relative minor substitution, Holobaugh also makes use of the

"cosmic law of chordal chromaticism," which goes something like this: You can engage in any form of chromatic shenanigans if you nail your destination chord from a half-step away at the start of a new measure. "Rock 'n' Roll Ruby" has a standard blues structure, which dictates that the IV (in this instance,  $D6$ ) occurs on bar 5's downbeat. The 12 chordal shifts that Smith executes in bars 3 and 4 build tension that gets released in bar 5. Astute readers will notice that in bar 4, beat four, the penul-

timate move is a downward whole-step jump. Hey—like Holobaugh, do whatever it takes to make that final chromatic  $D\flat6$ - $D6$  push happen on the new bar's downbeat.

## RAVE ON

To discover how rockabilly evolved *after* the big bang at Sun Records, check out "Go Daddy Go—12 Classic Rockabilly Riffs" in the Nov. '98 *GP*. In this lesson, Jesse Gress explores hot licks from Paul Burlison, Cliff Gallup, Joe Maphis, and other greats. ■

### Ex. 8

♩ = 132-144

Rockabilly swing

♩ = ♩ (I)  $A6$

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"Blues is a real simple recipe, but it's also a complicated, organic thing," says Sardinas. "You can't just say, 'Blues is these three chords.'"





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BY SHAWN HAMMOND



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exactly what the 32-year-old Florida native seeks in his life and his music. After all, the guy plays a pickup-equipped acoustic resonator guitar through a stack of Rivera amps.

Soon after picking up guitar at the age of six, Sardinas quickly delved into the acoustic stylings of players such as Mississippi Fred McDowell and Big Bill Broonzy, while simultaneously gravitating to the flash and allure of rock gods like Hendrix and Clapton. In 1990, Sardinas settled in L.A., and started singing and playing acoustic guitar on street corners. Before long, he hooked up with bassist Paul Loranger and drummer Scott Palacios, and the trio went on to perform more than 300 notoriously wild shows per year.

In 1999, the band captured their raucous blend of blues-rock on vinyl with the acclaimed *Treat Me Right*. Sardinas' latest collection of vice-filled tales of women and whiskey is *Devil's Train* [Evidence]. Crammed with gritty, lightning-fast slide licks, tons of swagger, and a duet with blues



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*How did you get introduced to Delta blues?*

I discovered the blues by buying used records. I'd find something and say, "Wow, this is amazing—who is this guy?" Then I'd find another album and think, "This is incredible. It's the best thing I've ever heard." Each artist I'd listen to would just floor me. I started buying stuff that was more accessible—like an Elmore James album—and then I'd find out what inspired *him*. As I discovered the earlier Delta stuff—guys like Son House and other players from the '20s and '30s—I heard as much power as I did in a Hendrix song. On the other hand, I was exposed to rock my whole life, and I love rock and roll. And every electric-guitar player—from Chuck Berry to Stevie Ray—has mixed rock and roll with the blues. Being exposed to rock and roll fused my love of raw acoustic music with the electric guitar. It's what led me to electrify my Dobros and turn them into what I consider my "Stratocasters."

*What is it about resonator guitars that appeals to you more than a steel-string acoustic*

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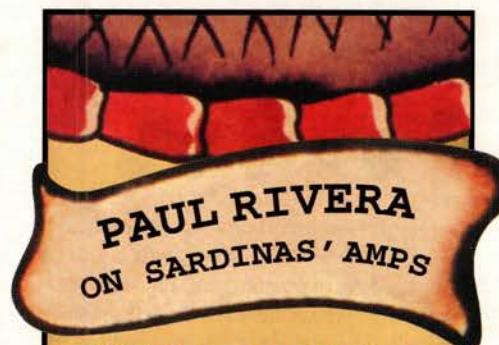
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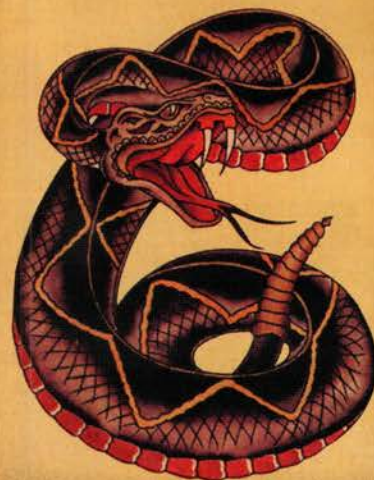
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Reverb II amps, but that whole Fender setup was like this fragile ecosystem. It was *my* sound, but I had so many problems with the Twin IIs on the road that I stopped using them. Then I was approached by Paul Rivera—who designed the Twin Reverb IIs—and he built me some custom

amps that incorporated all the tones I dig. My Rivera combo has two Celestion Vintage 30s, and if I'm playing a festival or an arena, I also run a head version of the amp into two 4x12 cabinets and a subwoofer—which just makes it sound *magical*.

*Has amplifying your Dobros posed any feedback problems?*

I love it when I get feedback! Years ago, when I was figuring out my playing style, I discovered the limitations of my setup. But now I've taken those things and turned them to my advantage. I thought, "If I do this, then this happens. But if I just contain it, it's actually kind of cool." You just have to get in touch with your instrument.

My guitars are very temperamental—what can I say, I've got a piece of Popsicle stick for a bridge! But there's nothing that my guitars give me that I can't work with.

*How did you mic your amp for the album sessions?*

We positioned a couple of Shure SM58s at about 9 o'clock on one of the speakers, and we also used some CAD mics to capture room ambience.

*Did you ever mic the guitar itself?*

Yeah, if I wanted to incorporate more of the acoustic sound—like on "Aggravatin' Papa" and "Be Your Man."

*What are some of the other elements of your rig?*

I use a CryBaby wah, a Dunlop Univibe, and, occasionally, an MXR flanger. My strings are Gibson Phos Bronze, gauged .013-.058, and I use Dunlop picks—a thumbpick and a metal fingerpick for my index finger. Although I only use one fingerpick, I also use my other fingers a lot. All my high-end picking is done with my ring finger.

*You use a brass slide, right?*

I prefer brass pipe because it has the right density and weight, and I've always connected with the way it resonates on the strings. I don't feel the urge to experiment with different slides, and I don't like chrome, steel, or glass—even though they offer something really different.

*How many tunings do you use?*

All kinds of tunings—dropped D, dropped G, B- and A-minor tunings, as well as a lot of open major tunings.

*Did you track many guitar overdubs?*

I overdubbed some solos and a few other things, but if you overdub too much, you can't keep the energy intact. You gamble with losing the raw feel the song needs.

*Who are your main guitar influences?*

There's a wide spectrum, but early Delta and country blues were a big inspiration—from Charlie Patton to Barbeque Bob, Mississippi Fred McDowell, and Bukka White. That primal essence was a real fire starter for me. But I also got into the early electric sounds of Chicago blues—like Elmore James, Muddy Waters, and Howlin' Wolf—and everything from Chuck Berry's '50s stuff to '60s players like Clapton, Hendrix, Jimmy Page, and Rory Gallagher. All the great players who spoke with their own voice really touched a nerve.

*Do music theory and formal study have any place in your playing?*

No, I learn by ear. Most of the really great players from every genre learned by ear and couldn't read or write music. I don't think knowing that stuff is damaging, but you have to feel the music—you can't learn everything from a book. It's funny, because I've done three tours with Steve Vai, and we approach the guitar in very dissimilar fashions, but when it comes to

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playing passionately, we're the same.

*Your image and stage persona are worlds apart from some of your traditional influences. Is part of that an effort to take the blues to wider audiences?*

I don't think about it that way. I just have a

love for blues and rock, and I don't feel like I have to fit some sort of mold. All the great voices of blues weren't following anybody—they were doing their own thing.

*So you never feel torn between trying to please blues purists and trying to attract more people to the genre?*

No. There are purists in every form of music, but as long as I'm true to myself, I'm all right with playing blues *my* way. But I also love pure, traditional blues. I've played with B.B. King, Otis Rush, and John Lee Hooker, and, on the new album, I played a duet with Honeyboy Edwards—who's one of the last guys alive from the beginning of the blues. He was with Robert

Johnson the night he was poisoned, for crying out loud! If I was born 40 years ago, I'd be playing blues much differently, but I still think I'm being true to the spirit of what blues is all about.

*What was it like recording "Gambling Man Blues" with Honeyboy Edwards?*

It's an honor playing with someone like Honeyboy or Johnny Winter or Hubert Sumlin—people who have been around and who have contributed so much music. We recorded "Gambling Man Blues" in a hotel room because I wanted to capture the spirit of great old blues records. Guys like Robert Johnson recorded their stuff in hotel rooms, so we just set up a couple of mics and recorded it to DAT.

*Do you feel a responsibility to keep Delta blues alive?*

I have the utmost reverence for traditional blues. In fact, the tattoo on my back says, "Respect Tradition" because that's where I ground myself. But I also believe blues music needs to move forward. Take *Are You Experienced*—there isn't a lot of blues on that album in the sense of a shuffle or a 12-bar blues, but Hendrix's style and feel come from the blues. Being influenced by music that was recorded on a plantation in the '30s doesn't mean you have to wear overalls and pretend you're someone else. Blues is about expressing emotion, and you should let the blues help you discover who *you* are.

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# NEW GEAR 2002

## THE TOP 40 HITS FROM WINTER NAMM

**N**

usic and partying go hand in hand, and one of the biggest bashes of the year is Winter NAMM—a four-day event in Southern California where the musical-instrument industry shows off its latest creations to crowds of music dealers and distributors from all over the world. NAMM is always a great hang for gear freaks of every stripe, and despite the scary business forecasts that proliferated in the wake of September 11, this year's show exceeded all expectations. The vibe on the floor was incredibly upbeat and the array of new products unveiled this year—everything from the > > >

**BY THE GUITAR PLAYER STAFF**



# NEW GEAR 2002

ergonomically bent Grip Pick to Line 6's astonishing Guitar Port—was positively overwhelming. A lot of manufacturers apparently decided to turn on their creative juices at a time when many thought the world was about to blow up, and if there was anything worth celebrating at NAMM, it was the fortitude and inventive spirit that prevails in this industry.

Exploring the football field-sized halls of the Anaheim Convention Center revealed not only a boat load of new guitars, amps, pedals, rack effects, and recording gear, but also such scintillating surprises as the Crate BV 300H (a prototype 300-watt, three-channel tube head that was loud enough to kill small critters), the Hiwatt Tape Echo (which has two very obvious things going for it), and the Godin Fort guitar case (a 2.5 lb enclosure that could protect your pre-war Martin D-45 from



works great. Automagic, dist. by Godlyke, (973) 835-2100; godlyke.com.

## ◀ BAD CAT HOT CAT

Designed by Mark Sampson, the 30-watt Hot Cat (\$2,959) is a single-channel, class A amp that offers an expansive tonal range courtesy of a flexible preamp and a dual-EL34 output stage. The Hot Cat's Clean and Gain inputs allow for a broader array of rhythm and lead textures, and, by connect-

ing an A/B/Y box to these jacks, you can blend the signals to create either cleaner distortion tones or more distorted clean sounds. The Hot Cat has clean volume, gain, edge, level, bass, treble, brilliance, and master-volume controls, and can be optimized for a softer or harder dynamic response by selecting either a tube rectifier (5AR4, 5Y3, 5U4) or the built-in solid-state rectifier. The Hot Cat is entirely point-to-point wired using terminal strips instead of boards, and is available in 1x12 or 2x10 combo formats. A head version

goes for \$2,599. Bad Cat, (909) 808-8651; bad-catamps.com.

## ◀ B.C. RICH MICK THOMPSON SIGNATURE MODEL

You have to hand it to B.C. Rich. Trends in guitar design have come and gone, yet they've stuck to their guns with their one-of-a-kind style solidbodies. Designed in conjunction with Slipknot's six-string-sicko, Mick Thompson, the NJ Signature Series Warlock (\$799) has all you need to piss-off your folks and

a stomp attack by Hulk Hogan).

It would probably take an entire issue of *Guitar Player* to cover everything we saw at NAMM, but rather than compile a stupifyingly huge list of new products, we decided to spotlight the 40 items that really made an impression on us. Of course, we haven't had a chance to field test any of these things yet, but stay tuned, as we'll be reporting in-depth on many of the products featured here in upcoming Bench Tests. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this exposé of highlights from NAMM 2002. —ART THOMPSON

## ◀ AUTOMAGIC SILVER MACHINE WAH

The German-made Silver Machine Wah (\$360) offers a ton of hip features in a bitchin', stainless-steel enclosure. The first cool attribute is the Automagic activator—a pressure sensor that turns the effect on when you put your foot on the trea-

dle, and turns it off when you remove your foot. For those who like to use wah pedals as static filters, there is also a "continuous on" mode. The Automagic provides three switchable frequency bands and four bandwidths, as well as both wah and wah/dry modes. This thing looks, sounds, and







get serious metal tone. Details include a mahogany body, rosewood-on-maple neck, dual EMG-HZ humbuckers, and mother-of-pearl neck inlay with the heart-warming salutation, "Hate." Available finishes include black and blood red. (What did you expect, sea-foam green?) **B.C. Rich**, (513) 451-5000; bcrich.com.

### ▲ BOSS PW-10 V-WAH

A full-on wah workstation disguised as a mere pedal, the V-Wah (\$195) offers an astounding array of features for filter freaks. The first course is a selection of COSM models of popular wah flavors from Vox, CryBaby, and Morley. Then there's a separate voice mode with 11 preset frequency ranges that lets you "vocalize" your wah timbres. You can also mix eight distortion/overdrive effects with your chosen wah col-

or—the fuzzy stuff is based on Boss stompboxes such as the OD-1 Overdrive, the DS-1 Distortion, and the MT-2 Metal Zone—or abandon the wah-cophony by opting for a rotary-speaker simulation. Other goodies include a bass-guitar setting and the ability to go techno with a collection of analog-synth sounds. And when you're through messing with all the tonal options, you can save up to three of your wah-derful creations in user memory. The V-Wah can be powered via six AA batteries or an optional AC adaptor. **Roland**, (323) 890-3700; rolandus.com.

### ◀ BURNS BRIAN MAY SIGNATURE SERIES

Burns turned a lot of heads when they unveiled a faithful reproduction of Brian May's Red Special guitar with features and playability that belie its \$1,095 price tag. Like the original, the Signature features a 24" scale, 24 frets (plus a zero fret), and three Burns Tri-Sonic pickups



wired in series with three on/off and three phase-reversal switches. Changes and improvements include locking Grover tuners and a mahogany body and neck (when is someone going to go for the May-approved oak body?). You can tie your mother down with vintage cherry or three-tone sunburst finishes. Now I'm Here? Now I'm there! **Burns USA**, (866) 677-0056; burnsusa.com.

### DEAN ► CADILLAC TIME CAPSULE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

One part Explorer, one part Les Paul, and a million parts cool, the U.S.-made Cadillac Time Capsule 25th Anniversary (\$2,950) comes with an arched, figured-maple top on a mahogany body, Grover tuners, 24-karat gold hardware, a 24<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"-scale rosewood-on-mahogany neck with abalone inlays, and three DiMarzio pickups. The Dean people are only making 100 of the Time Capsule flame tops, and only 50 in black, so if you want to drive one of these gorgeous gas guzzlers you better act now. For more budget-minded commuters, Dean also offers the import Cadillac Select for the Hyundai-esque price of \$599. **Dean**, (727) 519-9669; deanguitars.com.

### DIGIDESIGN ► MBOX

Guitarists salivating for a butt-simple laptop studio can stop with the mad-dog routine—the Mbox (\$495) makes digital music exquisitely mobile with a cagey combo of hardware and software. On the hardware side, you get a USB-powered audio interface with 24-bit resolution, two Focusrite mic preamps, TRS analog



inputs, two analog inserts, 48-volt phantom power, zero-latency monitoring, headphone jacks with a dedicated volume control, and analog (1/4") and digital (S/PDIF) outputs. The micro-interface can easily fit into a gig bag—or even the front pocket of a soft-shell

guitar case. The Mbox includes Pro Tools 5.2 LE digital-audio software, as well as support for Digidesign's DigiStudio, which lets Pro Tools users collaborate on sessions over the Web. Add a Pro Tools-compatible, USB-equipped laptop, and you can track anywhere from

your rehearsal studio to a vacation shack in the Virgin Islands. Mac users will reap the goodness first, but Windows capability for the Mbox system will follow soon after. **Digidesign**, (650) 731-6300; digidesign.com.

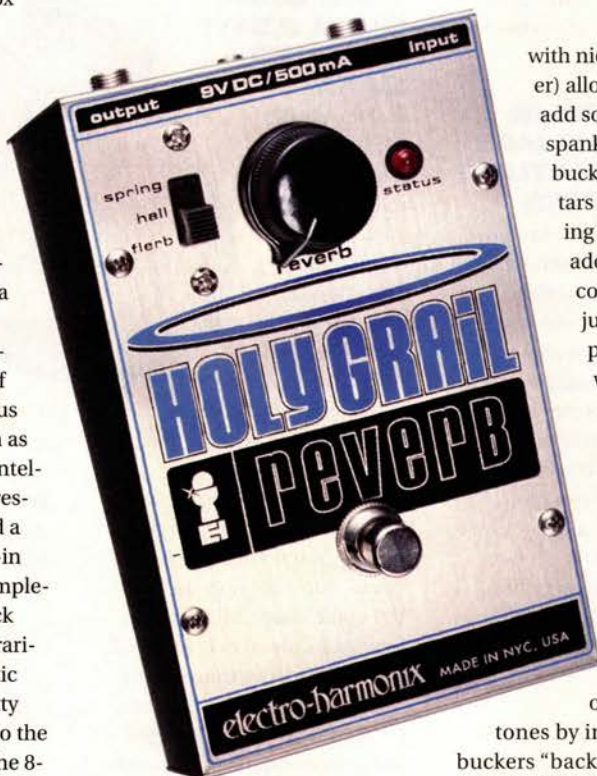




# NEW GEAR 2002

## DIGITECH GNX3

Can it get any nuttier than an amp-modeling stompbox with onboard effects and a built-in digital 8-track recorder? The GNX3 (\$719) promises an embarrassment of riches for guitarists on the go. For starters, you get the amp modeling, speaker-cabinet imaging, and Warp capabilities that earned the GNX1 a *Guitar Player* Editors' Pick Award. Then you get the excellent stompbox models of the GNX2, and a tremendous bounty of multieffects such as an 8-second delay looper, intelligent pitch shifting, compression, an envelope filter, and a Whammy. Toss in the built-in drum machine, full MIDI implementation, the Learn-A-Lick feature, GenEdit editor/librarian software, and a chromatic tuner, and the GNX3 is pretty wacky even *before* you get to the onboard digital recorder. The 8-track system features 24-bit A/D/A converters, expandable memory (via SmartMedia cards), a S/PDIF output, and a 44.1kHz sample rate. The crazy



est part is that you can manage all record and playback operations with your foot! Although the digital workstation is designed primarily for songwriting applications, the GNX3's XLR and instrument inputs make it possible to turn a band rehearsal into a full-blown recording session.

DigiTech, (801) 566-8800; digitech.com.

## ◀ DIMARZIO BLUES-BUCKER

A pickup that looks like a humbucker but sounds like a P-90, the Bluesbucker (\$99; \$115

with nickel or gold cover) allows guitarists to add some sparkle and spank to their humbucker-equipped guitars without changing the look or adding noise. The coil with the adjustable polepieces produces sound while the other coil, according to DiMarzio, "is along for the ride to cancel hum and look cool." Because only one coil is "hot," it's possible to obtain different tones by installing Bluesbuckers "backwards." They can also be split into true single-coils with minimal output loss. DiMarzio, (718) 981-9286; dimarzio.com.

## ▲ ELECTRO-HARMONIX HOLY GRAIL REVERB

The Holy Grail reverb pedal (\$136) is a fat sounding, amazingly simple stompbox. Housed in Electro-Harmonix's classic trapezoidal enclosure, and sporting a single mix control, the Grail offers three choices of 'verb: spring, hall, and a nutty-sounding combination reverb/modulation effect called Flerb. A 9-volt DC jack and an on/off LED are also provided.

Electro-Harmonix, (718) 937-8300; newsensor.com.

## ▼ EPIPHONE MANDOBIRD

At first glance, the Epiphone Mandobird (\$299) looks like the product of a Johnny Winter/Herve Villechaize design team. Closer inspection, however, reveals a totally cool and *cute* instrument. Although the Mandobird isn't actually a mandolin (it only has four strings instead of eight), it sports a mandolin's 14" scale length, as well as mini Grover tuners, a Mandobird single-coil pickup, and a nato neck with a rosewood fretboard. Mandobird is the word! Epiphone, (800) 444-2766; epiphone.com.





# PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

## A GALLERY OF NAMM MOMENTS

**F**irst, there's the noise—a thundering waterfall of voices, rolling luggage, and disembodied riffs. It often starts at the Hilton bar, and then it snakes through the hotel lobby, spreads across the courtyard, and saturates the entrance of the Anaheim Convention Center in southern California. Inside the actual halls—where rows upon rows of manufacturers unveil new products—the cacophony reaches volcanic proportions. This is Winter NAMM 2002, and it's one gigantic funhouse of gear, rock stars, parties, press events, concerts,

product demos, and more gear.

It's also where our industry gets down to the task of doing business, and the financial health of your favorite manufacturer, music store, and gear magazine can be decided within four or five days. But any value the show might have as a prognosticator of the industry's short-term future is overshadowed by the good vibes of a community of rabid gear lovers surrounded by new toys, new technologies, and the promise of new sounds.

—MICHAEL MOLEND



Lace introduced its new line of Rat Fink guitars and amps by having artist Ken Mitchroney paint Big Daddy Roth's racer-ific designs right in the booth.



Steve Vai was honored by Carvin's Dave Flores for contributing to *Guitars for Freedom*—a tribute CD benefiting the N.Y. Twin Towers Relief Fund.



The Fender Custom Shop cooked up a colorful gumbo of reissue Esquires.



Fender's custom shop also scored a groovy coup by having noted designer Paul Frank work up a signature Tele. Frank sewed the case himself, and inside the pocket was a certificate of authenticity and a series of signed photos of the designer with his trusty sewing machine.



Mrs. Phyllis Fender received an award from G&L Guitars' Dave McLaren (left) and John McLaren (right) to commemorate the ten years she has helped the company preserve her late husband's tremendous legacy.



Parties and concerts seem to rage from dusk until dawn at NAMM. Some of the highlights were Eric Johnson riffing at the Marshall party, Ozomatli getting down at the Digidesign bash, and Jackson Browne (shown above) playing his hits at the Sennheiser event.



In honor of *Guitar Player's* 35th birthday, MJ Guitars produced a beautiful anniversary model Mirage GT that was raffled off at the annual Music Player Group breakfast. Holding his prize, winner Gary Garritan of Orchestral Strings is flanked by (left to right) EQ Associate Publisher Dan Hernandez, Classified Advertising Manager Joanne Martin, GP Editor in Chief Michael Molenda, and MPG Vice President/General Manager Allen Wald.



At a tremendous Korg party honoring the 40th anniversary of Marshall amps, GP's Michael Molenda presented Jim Marshall (right) with a plaque that read: "Dear Jim, You made the machines that have inspired 35 years worth of *Guitar Player* readers to rock out with furiously awesome, kick-ass guitar tones. Congratulations on 40 years of Marshall muscle!"



Sometimes it seemed that very young guns were everywhere. Eleven-year-old Chelsea Constable was demoing all over with her signature Zion guitar, and Gibson- and Tech 21-sponsored Matthew Curran (another 11-year-old) was also hitting the booths. Here, Nick Sterling—an 11-year-old wunderkind who has jammed with heavies such as Eric Johnson—tried out an Isabella at the Warrior Guitars exhibit.



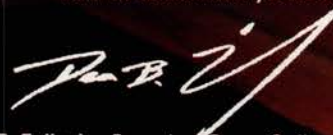
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# NEW GEAR 2002



## ESP EC-1000

ESP has put their own cool spin on the Les Paul design with the EC-1000 (\$1,249; \$1,299 with quilt-

ed maple top). This classy looking guitar sports a 24-fret, rosewood-on-mahogany set neck with abalone flag inlays. To add to the regal vibe, ESP has countersunk the knobs and toggle switch; laid abalone binding around the body, neck, and headstock; and decked it out

## MORE GROOVY GEAR!

**AKG.** C 900 condenser mic (\$250), GB 40 Guitarbug wireless transmitter (\$178).

**Alesis.** ModFX line: Fidelity X (\$129), Vertigo (\$129), Amplitron (\$129), Spectron (\$129), Bitrman (\$129), Korus (\$129), Phlnjr (\$129), Formantz (\$129), Lymitre (\$129), Metavox (\$129), Faze (\$129), Philtre (\$129), Nastify (\$129), Smashup (\$129).

**Alvarez Yairi.** DY95 acoustic (\$1,999), WY1RR acoustic-electric with Roland GK-2 pickup (\$2,499).

**Aphex.** Model 204 Aural Exciter (\$399), Model 207 Tube Preamp (\$649).

**Aria.** D'Aquisto jazz guitars: DQ-NY (\$3,595), DQ-NYE (\$3,995), DQ-CR (\$3,595).

**ART.** Tube MP Studio V3 Mic Preamp (\$149).

**Ashdown.** Peacemaker 60 full stack (\$1,399).

**Audio-Technica.** Artist Elite Series mics: AE5400 (\$579), AE3300 (\$439), AE6100 (\$289), AE4100 (\$289).

**Behringer.** V-AMP2 (\$199), GI100 Ultra-G DI (\$59).

**Brian Moore.** C-90P World Peace guitar (\$11,000), DC/1P World Peace (\$12,000).

**C. Hall Guitars.** PME-J Small Jazz Archtop (\$5,500).

**Carvin.** Cobalt Series acoustics: C250 (\$379), C350 (\$419), C750 (\$549), C780S (\$579), C980 (\$779).

**Charvel.** Journeyman (\$749).

**Cort.** CEC-1 classical (\$650) and M200 (\$269).

**D'Angelico.** NYL-2 Special (\$3,795), NYA-2 flat-top (\$3,950).

**Daisy Rock.** Heartbreaker Artist (\$399).

**Danelectro.** Shift Daddy (\$149).

**dbx.** ProVocal mic preamp (\$449).

**Demeter Amplification.** New 4x12 cabinet (\$899).

**DigiTech.** New stompboxes: Synth Wah (\$119), Main Squeeze (\$119), DigiReverb (\$144), DigiDelay (\$144), Multi-Chorus (\$134), HyperPhase (\$119), TurboFlanger (\$119), Metal Master (\$129), Hot Rod (\$119), Overdrive (\$119).

**DOD.** YJM308 Yngwie Malmsteen Preamp Overdrive (\$99).

**Electro-Harmonix.** Wiggler Tube Vibrato/Tremolo (\$298).

**Everly Music.** Everly Star Picks (\$0.50).

**Fender.** Cyber-Deluxe (\$999), Traveler Speedster Guitar (\$499), Mini Tonemaster amp (\$54), GD-47S acoustic (\$764), GD-47SCE acoustic/electric (\$964), GD47S12 12-string acoustic (\$814).

**Fishman.** Neo-D Acoustic Guitar Pickup (\$99).

**Foretex.** VF80 8-track digital recorder (\$699).

**G&L.** ASAT Classic Custom (\$1,400) and Semi Hollow (\$1,550).

**Garrison Guitars.** G-25 acoustic (\$739).

**Guild.** F50R acoustic (\$2,599), X180 Park Avenue (\$2,899).

**Highlander.** Pro Acoustic Mix (\$699).

**Hiwatt.** Custom Tape Echo (\$869).

**Hughes & Kettner.** zenTera head (\$3,200) and combo (\$1,999).

**Ibanez.** AX1220BBK (\$999), RGT3120TDB (\$1,999), JEM7VBSL (\$2,499), SX72TBC (\$599), AW300CENT (\$899).

**IK Multimedia.** AmpliTube amp model plug-in (\$399).

**Jay Turser Guitars.** JT-300PAK guitar and amp-case package (\$324).

**Jodi Head Guitar Wear.** JHLGFOD-Tribal Blue Pinup strap (\$40).

**Korg.** Toneworks Pandora PX4 Personal Multi Effect Processor (\$250).

**Kustom.** Tube 12 amp (\$149).

**Lace.** Rat Fink guitars: RF1, RF2, RF3 (prices start at \$369).

**Laney.** TT100H amp (\$1,499).

**Mackie.** Two small combo mixers: DFX•6 (\$379) and DFX•12 (\$479).

**Martin.** Laurence Juber OMC-18VLJ Signature Edition (\$4,449).

**Motion Sound.** AG-110H AcousticField (\$899).

**Paul Reed Smith.** Redesigned Santana SE (\$738), Archtop (\$6,000).

**Planet Waves.** Jerry Garcia straps and picks (\$TBA).

**Presonus.** Acousti-Q Tube Acoustic Instrument Preamp (\$299).

**Roland.** MMP-2 Mic Modeling Preamp (\$695), MD-2 Mega Distortion (\$129), OD-20 Drive Zone (\$249), CE-20 Chorus Ensemble (\$249), BR-1180CD Digital Recording Studio (\$1,245).

**Rolls.** RFX147 Rotorhorn (\$230).

**Samick.** Totally re-designed guitar line, including Royale RL 3 (\$749).

**Seymour Duncan.** Mag Mic Blending Soundhole Pickup (\$410), SH13 Dimebucker (\$125).

**Shure.** Performance Gear mics: PG57 instrument (\$101), PG81 instrument (\$245), PGDMK6 drum mic kit (\$927).

**Squier.** Series 24 guitars: M-50 (\$308), S-65 (\$308), M-70 (\$689), S-73 (\$726), M-77 (\$817), Starfire (\$998), X-155 (\$1,126).

**T.C. Electronic.** G-Craft amp (\$2,995).

**Vox.** Clyde McCoy wah (\$250).

**Yamaha.** UD Stomp delay processor (\$649), SLG100N Silent Guitar (\$699), AES820 guitar (\$949).

**Zoom.** MRS-4 MultiTrak Recording Studio (\$499).



# Framus

**Old World Craftsmanship. New World Mojo.**

## The Framus Story

Framus was founded in 1946 and soon became famous for creating some of the world's most innovative guitars and amps. Europe's elite jazz players and rockers made these unique German-made instruments their top choice until the mid-'70s, when Framus ceased production.

But guitar aficionados wouldn't allow the Framus story to stop there. Many of the world's top players

convinced Hans Peter Wilfer, the president of Warwick, to produce the Framus line in his renowned Warwick factory in Germany. By the mid-1990's, Framus guitars and amps were reborn, and better than ever.

## The Legend Continues

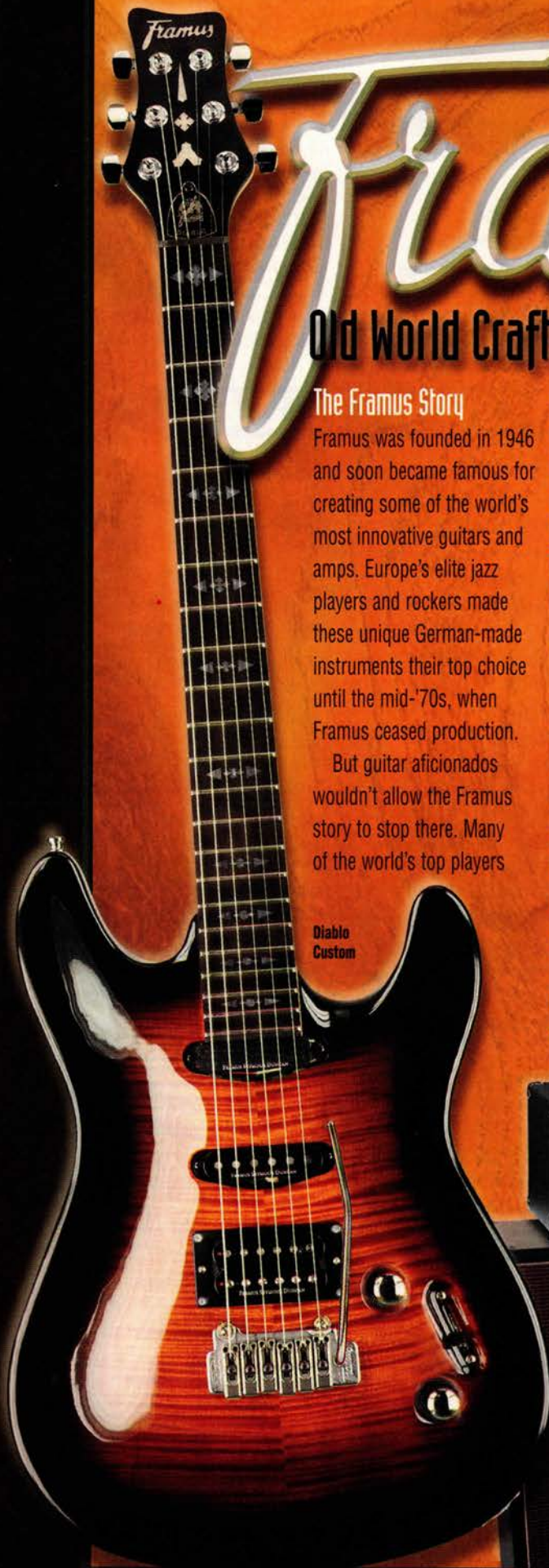
The new Framus guitars and amps combine Old World excellence with state-of-the-art technology to create modern musical masterpieces. These gorgeous guitars are crafted from sleek, hand-selected tone woods, with perfectly balanced, neo-classic designs and Seymour Duncan® pickups – all blended by modern European masters

to offer a magical palette of sonic possibilities.

Framus amps' advanced design and powerhouse of dynamic tube-tones can take you from creamy smooth jazz and blues to thundering clouds of industrial strength rock. Choose from 100W Cobra or Dragon heads with perfectly matched 4 x 12 cabs, or the 30W "Class A" Ruby Riot 2 x 12 combo. Mojo included.

## Available in the USA!

For the first time since the '70s, the Framus sound is available in the USA! Now everybody can play a legend. Get your hands on one today!



Diablo Custom



Dragon Head



FR 412-ST Cabinet

Ruby Riot Combo



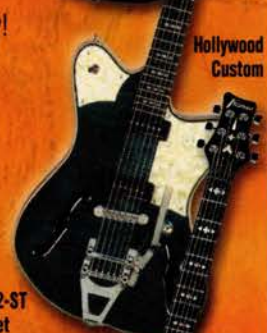
Diablo Pro



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# NEW GEAR 2002

with gold hardware. Rounding out the appointments are a pair of EMG-81 pickups and the TonePros System II locking bridge/tailpiece. Bravo! ESP Guitar Co., (323) 969-0877; esp-guitars.com.

## ▼ FENDER CUSTOM SHOP ESQUIRE

The Fender Custom Shop display is always jaw dropping, and one of this year's eye-catchers was a series of 14 Esquires (\$3,050 each) in traditional Fender colors, such as Surf Green, Fiesta Red, Ocean Turquoise Metallic, and Sonic Blue. This is one of the lightest Esquires we've ever hefted, and it sports a 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"-radius, figured-maple neck and a custom wiring scheme that provides a cool "quack" when you nudge the 3-way switch to the front position. Each of these colorful Esquires comes with a deluxe Fender gig bag and an SKB flight case.

All 14 of these beauts were wearing "sold" stickers by the second day of the show, but if you ask nicely, we're sure the Custom Shop wouldn't mind making you another in your choice of color. Fender Musical Instruments, (800) 488-1818; fender.com.

## ◀ FERNANDES RG13 REEVES GABRELS SIGNATURE

Based on Fernandes' space-age Ravelle design—one of the hippest-ever transmogrifications of the Les Paul silhouette—the RG13 (\$TBA) adds a Sustainer system and a vintage "gold

top" finish. Other features include a carved maple top, a mahogany neck, a 24<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"-scale rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, and DiMarzio MegaDrive pickups. Developed in collaboration with the terminally avant garde ex-Bowie guitarist (now a solo artist), the RG13 almost *implores* you to explore your bizarre side. Fernandes, (818) 252-6799; fernandes-guitars.com.

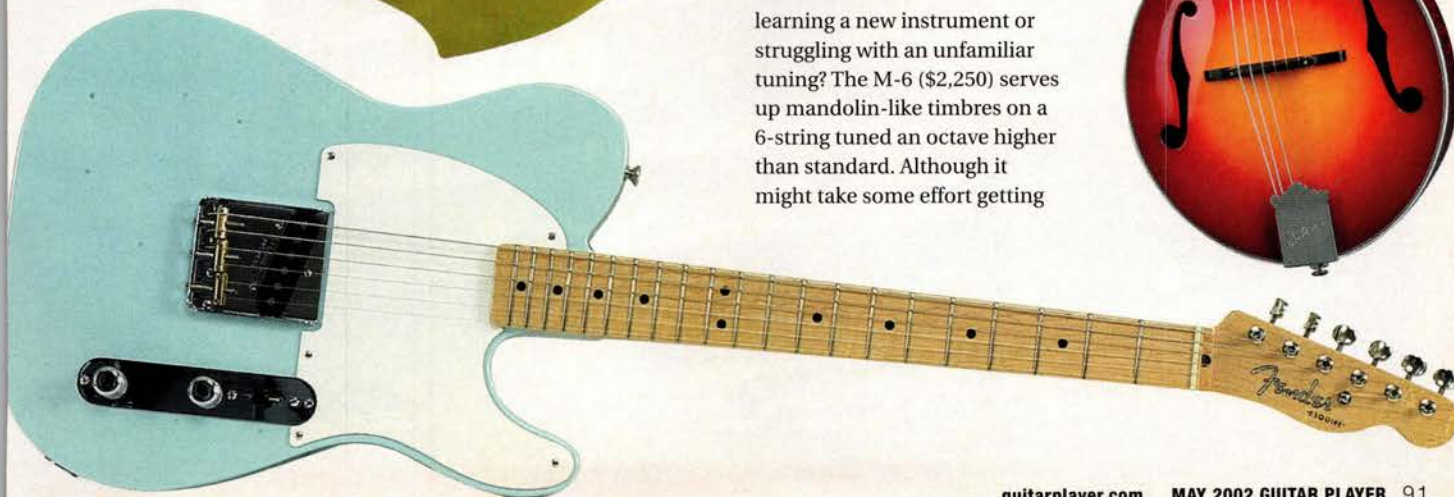
used to the short-scale neck, guitarists can evoke bluegrass and country flavors (as well as layer shimmering tones for super-wide frequency spectrums) without abandoning their normal playing style. The M-6 features an A-style mandolin body; a maple neck, back, and sides; a spruce top; an ebony fretboard; and a choice of Heritage Cherry, Sunburst, Trans Red, Trans Green, and Trans Blue finishes. Gibson, (615) 871-4500; gibson.com.

## ◀ GODIN FLAT FIVE X

Although the name conjures images of a hardcore jazz box, the Godin Flat Five X (\$1,895) is equal parts jazz machine and acoustic-electric. Sporting a lovely maple top and a chambered mahogany body, the Flat Five X struts Godin humbuckers, a rosewood-on-mahogany neck, and a Godin graphic EQ and preamp for the L.R. Baggs saddle transducers. Godin, (514) 457-7977; lasido.com.

## GIBSON M-6 MANDOGUITAR ▶

Want to expand your acoustic horizons without learning a new instrument or struggling with an unfamiliar tuning? The M-6 (\$2,250) serves up mandolin-like timbres on a 6-string tuned an octave higher than standard. Although it might take some effort getting





# tools for tone

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# NEW GEAR 2002

## GODIN ► FORT CASE

Weighing in at an astonishing 2½ lbs (only ½ lb heavier than a gig bag!), the Fort Case is quite possibly the eighth wonder of the world. Made from the same material used for steering wheels and bumper cores, the Fort Case (\$99) can absorb an enormous impact and keep your guitar snug and secure. The folks at Godin demonstrated this by putting one of their high-end acoustics in the Fort and throwing it around like the gorilla in the old Samsonite commercials—*amazing*. Godin, (514) 457-7977; lasido.com.

## GRETSCH ► TENNESSEE ROSE

Joining the ranks of sumptuous-looking Gretsch beauts is the new G6110-1962HT Tennessee Rose (\$2,400). A faithful re-creation of the early '60s Electroton hollowbody (also known as the Tennessean dur-

ing the era), the Rose features a laminated maple body with simulated f-holes and a hand-polished cherry-red finish. It sports a maple neck with a 25½"-scale ebony stained rosewood fretboard, neo-classic position markers, and a headstock inlaid with black pearl. The pickups are reissue single-coil Hilo Trons, and the controls include a 3-way selector, dual tone switches, individual pickup volumes, and a master volume. Chrome-plated solid-brass knobs and a Gretsch Bigsby round out the hardware details. The Tennessee Rose may be a re-make of Gretsch's most basic electric

hollowbody of the '60s, but, as with all of the instruments produced by the Georgia-based company, it looks and feels like a million bucks! Gretsch, (912) 748-7070; gretsch.com.

## GROOVE TUBES ▼ SFX STEREO ENCODER AND G3 DECODER CABINET

Everyone is familiar with the sound of stereo, but, thanks to Groove Tubes' patented SFX technology, you

can revel in a 300-degree stereo soundfield that's produced by a *single* cabinet. We heard the demo at NAMM, and the lush, 3-D effect produced by the SFX setup was nothing less than mindboggling. The trick, of course, requires that you install an E1 Encoder (\$749) into your signal chain *after* your stereo effects processor and *before* your power amps. (A pair of effects loop-equipped guitar amps and a stereo ef-

fects processor will also work). You also need a SFX Decoder speaker cabinet to complete the system (the G3 guitar cab shown here runs \$699).

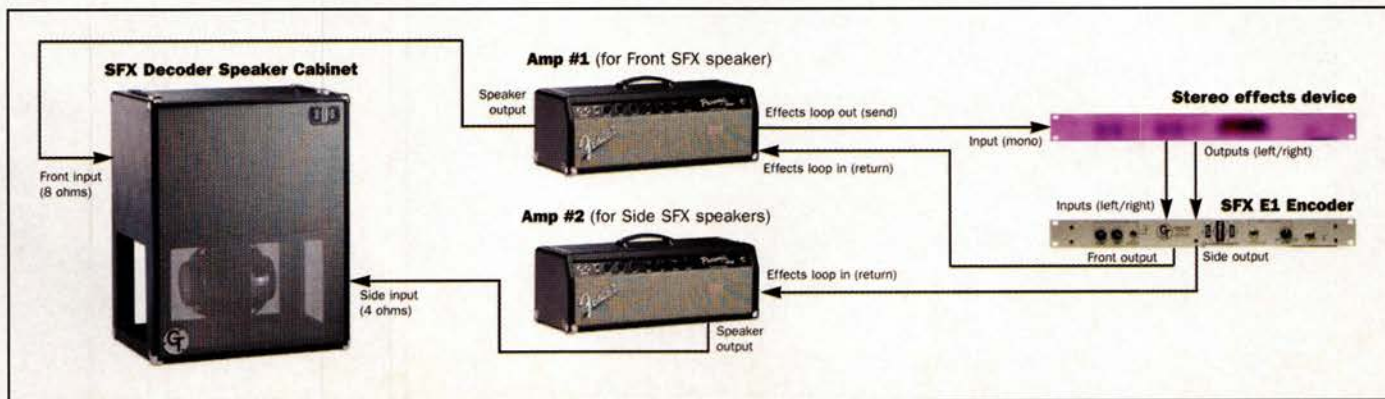
SFX technology has previously been available in the Fender Acoustasonic amp (Fender is the only company currently licensed to produce SFX-equipped products), but, thanks to a special arrangement between the two companies, Groove

Tubes is able to offer a limited number of SFX units for players who wish to incorporate the technology into their own systems. If you've ever dreamed of expanding your sound beyond the realm of standard, two-speaker stereo, you've simply got to try

SFX—there's nothing like it. Groove Tubes, (800) 459-5687; groovetubes.com.

## ▲ HAMER MONACO

It takes a *lot* of guitar to stand out at NAMM, but Hamer scored a bullseye this year with the beautiful Monaco (\$2,699). This first-ever single-cutaway from Hamer features an ivoroid bound, one-piece Honduran mahogany hollow body with a hand-carved top of solid spruce. The three-piece, stressed-mahogany neck meets the body in a dovetail joint, and







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has a 25½"-scale, 14" radius rosewood fretboard with mother-of-pearl "victory" inlays and wide-oval frets. Hardware details include a Bigsby tremolo and a Tune-o-matic-style bridge, chrome Schaller tuners, and a pair of Duncan humbuckers—a Pearly Gates in the neck position and a Custom in the bridge. The controls include dual volumes, a master tone, and a 3-way pickup selector. The Monaco's red transparent finish is stunning, and the guitar has groovy details such as Strap-Lok compatible strap buttons, contour-matching controls, and righteous binding work. Lightweight and beautifully balanced, the Monaco is a super-sexy addition to Hamer's line of fine custom guitars. **Hamer**, dist. by Kaman Music Corp., (860) 509-8888; kamanmusic.com.



of the B variety—which means it's one of the wackiest, kitschy-cool sounds you can unleash on an unsuspecting audience. The Hiwatt Echo-Theremin (\$149) lets you control pitch by moving your hand around its chromed dome. As your hand nears

the orb, the pitch gets higher. Move away, and the pitch gets lower. A frequency control sets the operating range of the frequency spectrum, and you also get up to 300 milliseconds of delay (along with dedicated time and level controls) to tweak the warble into even freakier spasms of sonic oddity. Yum. **Hiwatt**, dist. by Fernandes, (818) 252-6799; fernandesguitars.com.

## JACKSON SWEET-TONE JAZZ'R

Combining stunning woods, top-notch hardware, and gloriously beefy necks, Jackson's Jazz'R guitars (\$2,699 w/Duncan SP-90s; \$2,800 w/Duncan humbuckers) were among the coolest axes at the show. These beauties weigh next to nothing (thanks to their chambered, maple-on-spruce bodies), and they sport unfinished, quartersawn mahogany necks that feel incredibly

inviting to play—kind of like pulling your all-time favorite sweatshirt out of the dryer and putting it on. **Jackson Guitars**, (817) 831-9203; jacksonguitars.com.

## LEXICON MPX 110

Not only is Lexicon's MPX 110 (\$329) a great signal processor with happening reverbs, delays, and modulation effects, you can also use it as a super-duper, high-quality 24-bit A/D converter for interfacing with a digital-audio recorder. Other features include 240 presets (16 user), independent stereo processing, and two-stage headroom indicators. **Lexicon**, (781) 280-0300; lexicon.com.

## LINE 6 GUITARPORT

Perhaps the most talked-about product of the show was the GuitarPort (\$229)—a hardware/software combo that gives the player access to Line 6 amp



## HIWATT ECHO-THEREMIN

The eerie wail of Dr. Theremin's bizarre musical invention recalls '60s sci-fi movies

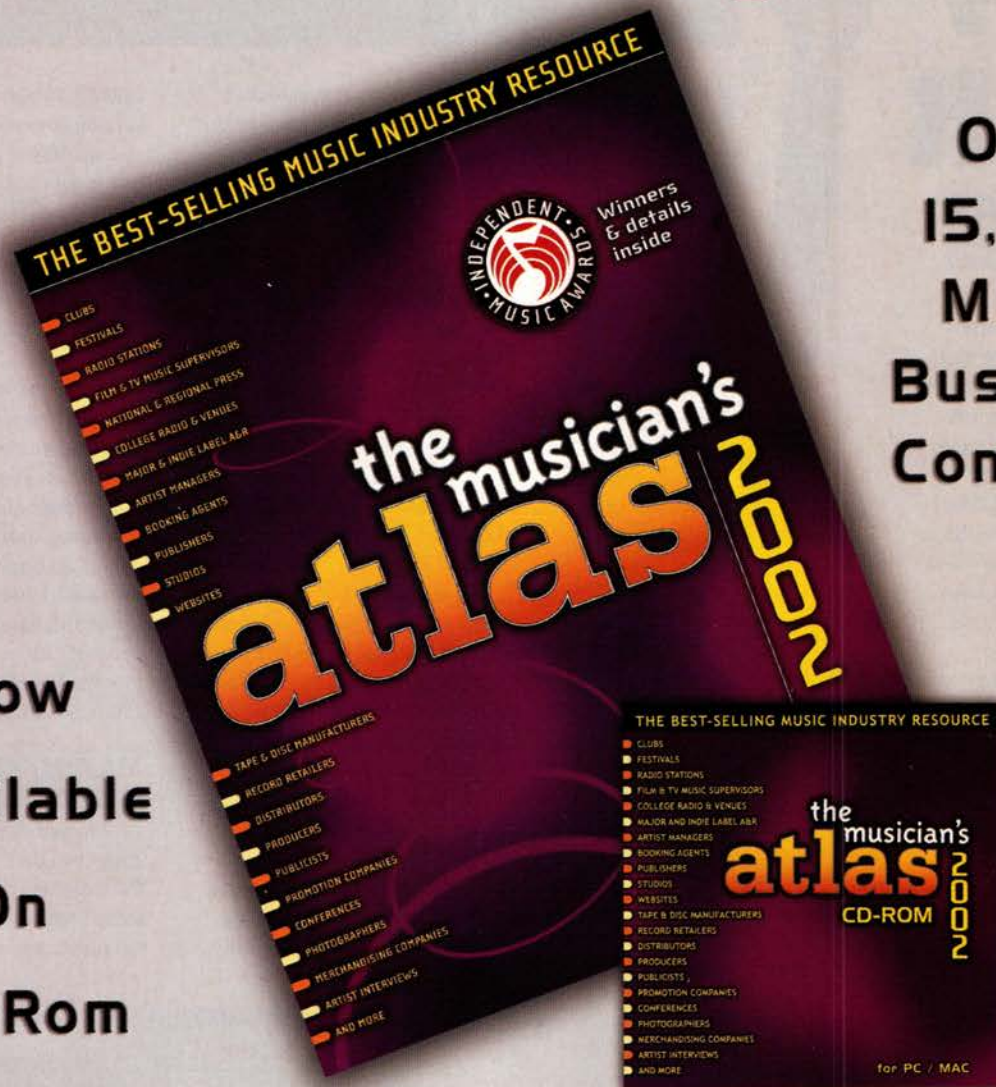




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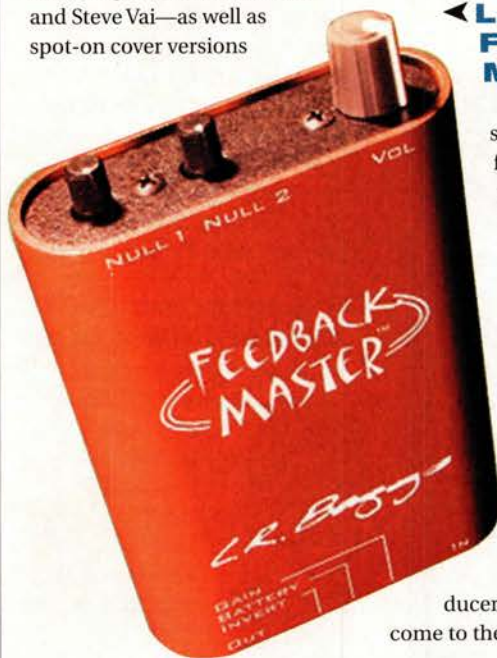
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and effect tones, and a whole lot more. Connect the GuitarPort to the USB port of your PC (the Mac version will ship later on in the year), and you'll get a collection of amps and effects (via an enhanced version of the company's Amp Farm plug-in), a tuner, a hum reducer, and an audio player that lets you jam along with CDs or mp3 files. Speaking of jamming, if you sign up with Line 6's optional online service (\$8 a month), you can riff over actual master recordings from Jimi Hendrix and Steve Vai—as well as spot-on cover versions



## ◀ L.R. BAGGS FEEDBACK MASTER

If you've ever strummed an amplified flat-top onstage, you know all about feedback—the rank, brace-busting, werewolf-in-heat kind of feedback that hurts your ears and sends your audience packing. Best known for his under-saddle pickups and slick iBeam

bridgeplate transducer, Lloyd Baggs has come to the rescue of red-faced



of tunes by a host of other artists. In each case, you have the power to mute selected guitar tracks (take out Jimi's lead track to "Purple Haze" and prepare to hear rhythm tracks you never knew existed), view tablature, and audition suggested amp settings. They couldn't have crammed too much more cool stuff into one product. **Line 6**, (818) 575-3600; line6.com.

pickers with his compact, easy-to-use Feedback Master (\$129). Equipped with two surgically narrow, fixed-depth, sweepable filters and a phase inversion switch, this feedback-suppressing preamp boasts discrete, class-A analog circuitry for a sweet, transparent sound.

We got a chance to test the Feedback Master at the show, and it's a no-brainer: Simply insert the Feedback Master between your guitar and sound system, and crank the Baggs' volume knob. When your guitar begins to groan or squeal, twist the Null 1 knob until the feedback drops off. Raise the volume some more, and twirl Null 2 to nuke any subsequent feedback. Sold with a belt clip and a mic-stand adapter, the Feedback Master works with virtually any active or passive pickup. **L.R. Baggs**, (805) 929-3545; lrbaggs.com.

## ▲ MARSHALL 2203ZW ZAKK WYLDE SIGNATURE

Marshall's latest high-powered rollout is the limited-edition Zakk Wylde Signature head

(\$2,250). The 100-watt amp is basically a JCM800 tricked out with a custom, "bullseye"-etched front panel that sports a Black Label Society logo along with the signatures of Jim Marshall and Zakk Wylde. Cabinet details include a small Marshall logo, a vintage-style handle, and a front panel that sports the same TV pattern grille-cloth used on the Marshall "tall vintage" speaker cab. The 2203ZW has a true-bypass effects loop, and the amp is fitted with 6550 output tubes for increased headroom and a more aggressive distortion edge. Each model comes with a bag of Zakk Wylde guitar picks, a custom cover, and a signed certificate of authenticity. Don't snooze on this one, as only 600 2203ZWs will be made. **Marshall Amplification**, (516) 333-9100; marshallamps.com.

## ▼ MESA/BOOGIE RECTIFIER RECORDING PREAMP

Mesa/Boogie's Rectifier series amplifiers basically defined the "nu metal" sound. Now, Boogie has harnessed the Rectifier's





# NEW GEAR 2002

punishing tone into the Rectifier Recording Preamp (\$999)—which has six 12AX7s, a parallel-stereo effects loop with mix control, loads of outputs, and the same bulletproof construction and cosmetics as its big brothers. Here's to some happy and hellacious tracking! **Mesa/Boogie**, (707) 778-6565; mesa-boogie.com.



## ▲ **MXR M-132 SUPER COMP**

Taking the best features of the beloved Dyna Comp and going one better, Dunlop's MXR Super Comp (\$129) boasts a bulletproof, die-cast zinc housing and super-cool glow-in-the-dark graphics. The "one better" is a newfangled attack-level knob that complements the original pedal's output and sensitivity controls. The attack control lets you keep as much of the transient attack as you want without losing any sustain on



the back end of the note. **Dunlop Mfg.**, (707) 745-2722; jim-dunlop.com.

## ▲ **PEAVEY XXL**

Inspired by the company's XXX head, the Peavey XXL (\$699) is a three-channel, solid-state head that pumps out 100 watts via Peavey's TransTube technology. The XXL comes with six different "style switches" that allow the user to customize the amp's tones, as well as a variable damping feature to

further enhance the tube-amp feel. The XXL offers a cool look, lots of flexibility, and plenty of power at an extremely reasonable price. Oh yeah! **Peavey Electronics Corp.**, (601) 483-5365; peavey.com.

## ▼ **RANDALL VMAX**

Auditioning new products at NAMM is tricky business—considering all the noise, you're never quite sure *what* you're hearing. We were certain about

one thing, however: The fire-breathing Randall Vmax (\$1,599) is a force to be reckoned with! The Vmax packs two independent preamp stages for different shades of pummeling tone: one solid-state, and one that uses two Sovtek 12AX7s. And with 300 watts on tap, you can underscore the word "pummeling." The Vmax's speaker-simulated output circuit is designed by Palmer—the same company that manufactures one of the best D.I. units around. Pretty sweet. Other features include an assignable (and footswitchable) 6-band EQ, a parallel effects loop, and a 5-button footswitch. **Randall**, (847) 949-0444; randallamplifiers.com.

## ▼ **SAMSON C01 CONDENSER MIC**

Home recordists on the lookout for large-diaphragm condensers often have to pony up hefty buckage to acquire the sexy, sonically sensitive mics. Although the C01 lists for \$175—which is a very seductive price—Samson is touting the microphone will street for a near-insane \$69! This low-cost beauty features a gold-plated XLR connector, an LED phantom power indicator (a cool way to confirm whether the C01 is getting juice), and a swivel stand mount. **Samson**,







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(516) 364-2244; samson-tech.com.

## SCHECTER ► C-1 CLASSIC

With a luxurious, quilted-maple top and elaborate neck inlay, the C-1 Classic (\$999) is not only a looker, it's an *affordable* looker. The C-1 flaunts a mahogany body, dual humbuckers (a Seymour Duncan JB in the bridge and a '59 in the neck), Grover tuners, and neck-thru-body construction. **Schecter**, (323) 469-8900; schecterguitars.com.



## ▲ SNAGG MICROCHIP IMPLANT

In an effort to keep bad people from stealing good guitars, the folks at SNAGG (Serial Number Authority for Global Goods) have designed a groovy little microchip ID that can be implanted in guitars, amps, or just about anything else you want to keep track of. This isn't like the car systems that can be tracked with a global positioning satellite, but rather it's like the pet IDs that have successfully returned thousands of critters to their worried owners. The SNAGG chip—which is

about the size of a grain of rice—can be installed in your instrument for about \$30, plus a \$20 registration fee. Then music stores and pawnshops can scan the instrument and, if your unique code comes up, you get your guitar back, and the bad guy goes to the pokie. **SNAGG**, (818) 508-6842; snag.com.

## ST. LOUIS ► MUSIC VFX5212

From the company that brings you Ampeg and Crate comes the two-channel 50-watt VFX5212 (\$1,099)—a 2x12 open-back combo that is part of the new V-Series tube-amplifier line. So what's the big deal about another open-back tube combo? Well, the VFX5212 offers something never before available in a tube amp—digital effects. In fact, you get 15 effects, including

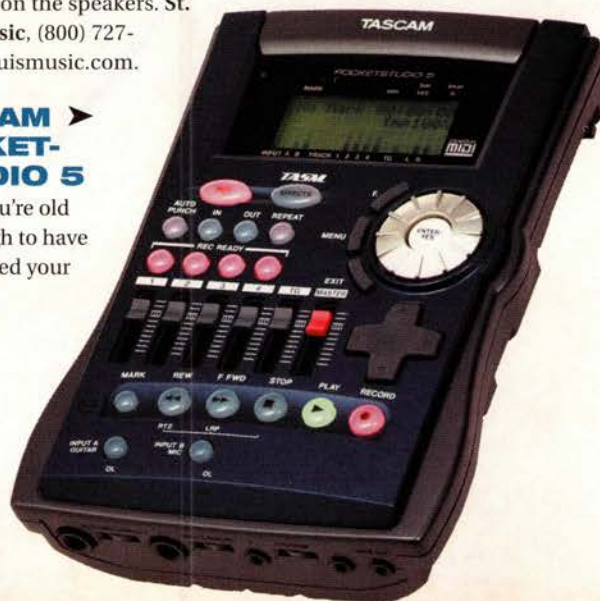


chorus, delays, reverbs, touch wah, vibrato, and several combination presets. The effects are also individually assignable to either channel, which means that when you switch channels you can switch effects too. Nice! The dual-EL34 output stage packs plenty of punch for live playing, and the independent tone controls and dead-simple effects interface make it a snap to dial-in happening tones. The V-Series amps—the line also includes the 15-watt, spring reverb-equipped V1512 at \$529, and the 1x12 VFX5112 at \$999—look like they'll be strong contenders in the mid-priced combo market, and St. Louis Music is backing them up with a five-year warranty on the electronics and a two-year warranty on the speakers. **St. Louis Music**, (800) 727-4512; stlouismusic.com.

## TASCAM ► POCKET- STUDIO 5

If you're old enough to have started your

home-recording career on a TEAC reel-to-reel machine, it's probably going to wig you out a little that the latest incarnation of multitrack recorders can fit in your jacket pocket. And, by the way, the delicate wonderbox that is the Pocketstudio 5 (\$599) has more power than the racks and racks of gear that invaded your entire bedroom back in the "good old days." The Pocketstudio 5 is a digital 4-track recorder that includes an internal General MIDI synth, 100 standard MIDI files arranged by genre, more than 100 effects, a built-in condenser mic, a headset mic, a 32MB Compact Flash card, dedicated guitar and microphone inputs, a headphone jack with a volume control, a USB port, and







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Listen to Eddie Van Halen play and you're not just hearing untold hours of practice, you're hearing a *lifetime* dedicated to his art. He's a virtuoso at one with his instrument – an effortless blur of hands and fingers. It's often hard to tell where he stops and his guitar begins. And where his guitar begins is with him. Working together, Eddie and Peavey have created the unparalleled EVH Wolfgang Series. Eddie's knowledge of what makes an extraordinary guitar and his dedication to perfection guides every aspect of the Wolfgang – he even inspects guitars right off the production line. So it's no accident that Wolfgang is fit to be played by one of the world's best. That's who designed it.



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mixdown to the mp3 format and e-mail (or upload) your work for all the world to hear.

Tascam, (323) 726-0303; tascam.com.

## TAYLOR LIBERTY TREE GUITAR

In September 1999, Hurricane Floyd irreparably damaged the last of the 13 Liberty Trees under which Colonists assembled to plan the American Revolution. The 400-year-old living landmark—a 90-foot tulip poplar—was cut

down after experts decided that it had become a safety hazard. When Bob Taylor heard the news, he purchased enough of the Liberty Tree wood to craft several hundred flat-tops.

The Taylor Liberty Tree guitar (\$7,998) features a grand-concert body, figured tulip poplar back and sides, and an abalone-edged Sitka spruce top. Unique appointments include a laser-etched fretboard inlay of the scrolled Declaration of Independence, a soundhole rosette composed of 13 stars, and a headstock inlay of the Colonial American flag. The Liberty Tree guitar offers a musical way to celebrate this country's struggle for political freedom. Taylor Guitars, (800) 943-6782; taylorguitars.com.

## TAYLOR NYLON SERIES (NOT PICTURED)

Traditional classical guitars sport wide, flat fretboards and relatively thick necks—a chunky

playing surface that often deters steel-string players from exploring the intimate, expressive sounds of nylon strings. With this in mind, Taylor developed a nylon-string guitar designed to feel comfortable to steel-stringers, yet provide righteous classical tone. The Nylon Series (\$1,598-\$2,998; photo unavailable at press time) has a 1 7/8" neck width, a 20"-radius fretboard, and a hybrid grand-concert body with a dreadnought's depth. After spending 20 minutes picking a Nylon Series guitar, we can attest to its uncommon playability.

Taylor is building four solid-wood, nylon-string models: the NS32ce (Sitka spruce top with sapele back and sides), the NS42ce (Sitka spruce top with ovangkol back and sides), the NS62 (Engelmann spruce top with flamed maple back and sides), and the NS72ce (Western red cedar top with East Indian rosewood back and sides). The Sitka guitars offer gloss tops,

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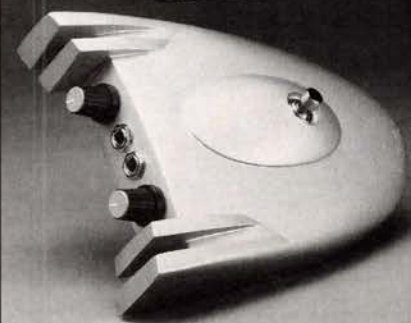


[www.vhtamp.com](http://www.vhtamp.com)

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and use Taylor's New Technology neck. "We've been working on a nylon-string guitar for five years," says Bob Taylor. "The NT neck design affects and improves the tonal quality of a nylon string at least as much as it does a steel-string guitar." Taylor Guitars, (800) 943-6782; [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com).

and Marshall-type overdrive, and the Drive A control yields Vox-esque distortion. The real hip thing about the Double Drive is its ability to *mix* the two types of distortion for some very cool and unique textures. Other details include level and tone controls, an on/off status LED, an all-metal enclosure, and a DC power jack. Tech 21, (212) 315-1116; [tech21nyc.com](http://tech21nyc.com).

## ▼ THD BI-VALVE-30

THD's 15-watt UniValve was a big hit last year with its superb tones and ultra-flexible features. The only thing missing was enough power to use it onstage. The new 30-watt BiValve-30 (\$1,495; \$1,645 with chrome cover) solves that problem with a parallel, single-ended class A output stage that lets you run



satin finished back and sides, and Fishman Prefix Pro electronics. The Engelmann and cedar instruments have all-gloss finishes and boast Fishman Prefix ProBlend systems. All NS models have a cutaway,

## ▲ TECH 21 DOUBLE DRIVE

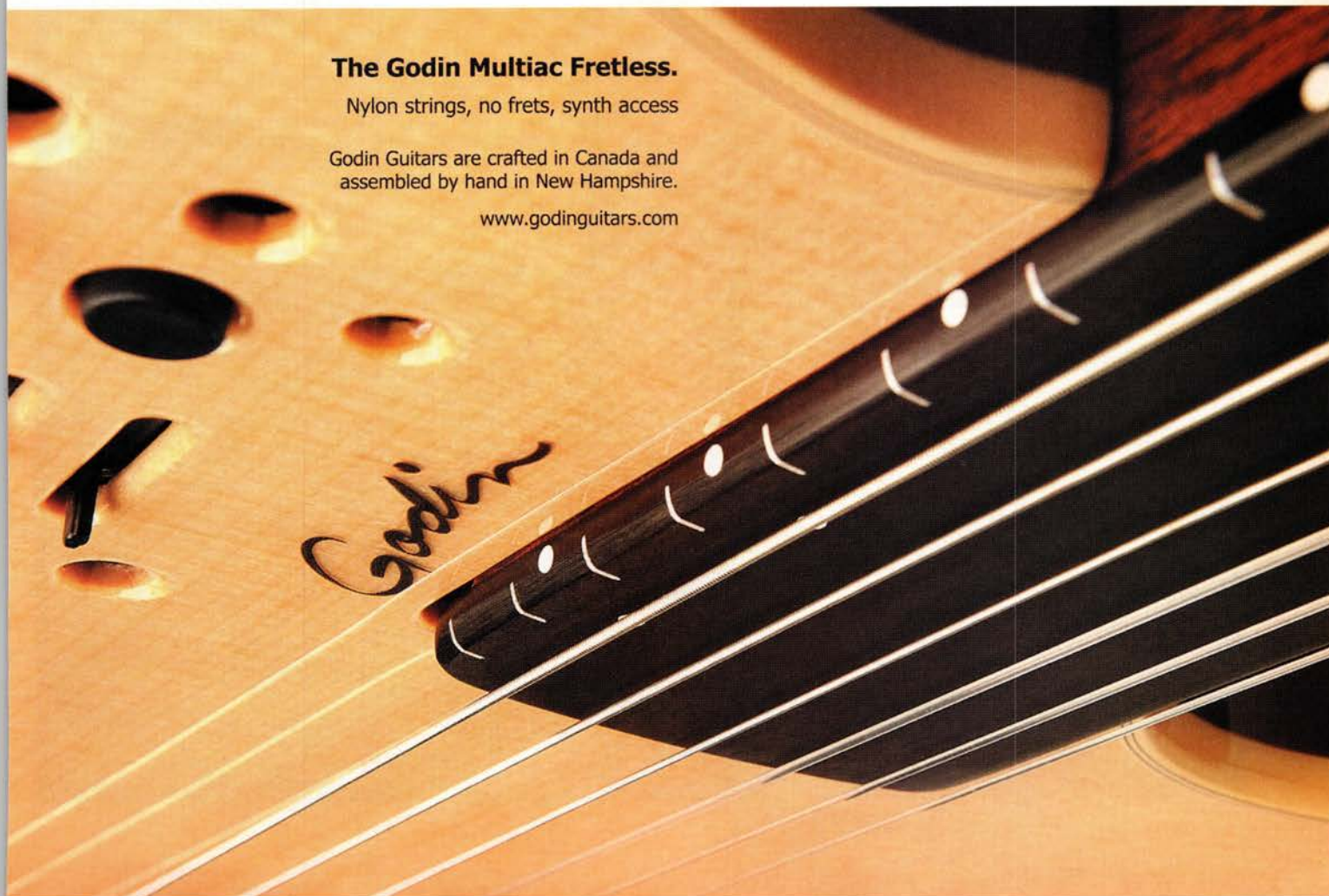
The Double Drive distortion pedal (\$125) offers two different types of grind—the Drive A/B control provides classic Fender-

## The Godin Multiac Fretless.

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two *different* octal-based output tubes (or two similar ones) simultaneously. The BiValve-30 can digest any combination of 6V6, 6L6, EL34, 6CA7, 6550, KT66, KT77, and KT88 tubes without rebiasing (it can also use EL84s fitted with optional THD Yellow Jacket adapters), and it includes all of the features found on the UniValve, such as a built-in Hot Plate power attenuator, Hi/Lo power operation, a variable line-out, and bypassable noise-reduction. During a demo at NAMM, the BiValve-30—running a 6550




and an EL34—produced a level of tonal complexity and sonic dimension that was simply off the scale. The BiValve-30 could easily be the richest, most detailed amp in its class, and to make the package even groovier, THD has also introduced 1x12, 2x10, and 2x12 combo speaker cabinets (priced at \$749, \$779, and \$799, respectively) to house the UniValve or the BiValve-30. **THD Electronics**, (206) 781-5500; [thdelectronics.com](http://thdelectronics.com).

**VHT  
VALVULATOR  
GP3**

Based on the circuit used in the VHT Pittbull Hundred/CLX and Ultra-Lead heads, the GP3

three-channel preamp (\$1,295) features a proprietary Dynamic Sensing circuit design that lets it produce amp-style output-stage dynamics—even when recording direct. The GP3 contains six 12AX7 tubes, independent tone controls for each channel, a switchable 6-band graphic EQ, cabinet simulation, dual direct-recording outputs, and a tube-buffered auxiliary loop/tuner out. Channels can be switched via MIDI or front-panel buttons, and the GP3's memory-voicing switches can be assigned to any channel. The GP3 has a pair of global, remote-relay switches for controlling external power amps and effects, as well as a tube-protection system that includes

a slow turn-on DC filament supply *and* an Automatic Standby function that provides a 15-second delay during filament warm-up before the high-voltage is supplied to the tubes.

The GP3 delivers stunning clean and high-gain tones, and its Gain Stacking function allows you to tailor the overdrive gain structure of the lead and rhythm channels to achieve the optimum balance of overdrive and tonal shape. The most impressive thing about the GP3, however, is its amp-like response. If you've avoided preamps because they lack the dynamic characteristics of a full-fledged amp, the GP3 could change your mind. VHT, (818) 253-4848; [vhtamp.com](http://vhtamp.com). 

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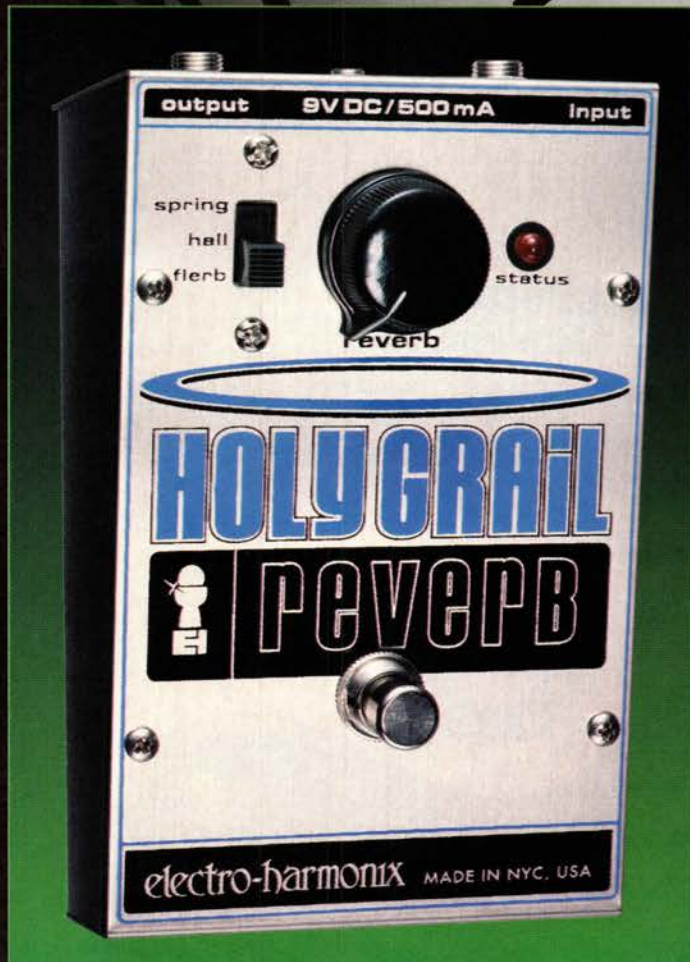
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## Bench Tests

# Action Jackson

## Jackson Swee-Tone Jazz'R SC

By Matt Blackett

**F**or many years, Jackson has been known for building top-quality rock and heavy metal guitars. Randy Rhoads, Dave Mustaine, and Anthrax's Scott Ian have all

relied on Jackson axes to dish out their heavier-than-thou tones. As a result, some guitarists may think metal is all Jackson can do. Au contraire. If the company's righteous Surfcaster (reviewed in the

### Snapshot

The Jackson Jazz'R SC (\$2,699 with case)—part of the Swee-Tone line from Jackson's custom shop—sports beautiful woods and hardware, and offers stellar tone and playability. The Jazz'R receives an **Editors' Pick Award**.

Semi-hollow spruce body

Tune-o-matic-style bridge with through-body stringing



Quilted-maple top and back

Seymour Duncan SP-90-3 Custom

Seymour Duncan SP-90-1 Vintage

Master volume and two tone controls



July 2001 *GP*) didn't prove the Jackson folks have other cards up their sleeve, the Jazz'R (\$2,699 with case) most certainly will.

This stunning instrument from Jackson's Swee-Tone line features a semi-hollow spruce body with a slightly arched maple top and back. The quartersawn Honduran mahogany neck runs the length of the body and sports a 1/4" slab of ebony for the fretboard. The pearl "J" on the ebony headstock and the pearl knobs are nice additions that add a touch of elegance.

The amber-lager-burst finish is beautifully applied, and it really shows off the big-leaf maple top's grain. The wood binding maintains the Jazz'R's worn-in, vintage vibe and complements the oil-finished mahogany neck very nicely. Overall, the cosmetics of the Jazz'R are top notch. The only flaws are a natural color streak in the fretboard that runs from the second to the seventh fret, and a very minor imperfection on the top. But in my opinion, these subtle quirks add to the instrument's character.

## Playability

The Jazz'R's neck is one of the most inviting, comfortable necks

I've played in a long time. For starters, it's big, beefy, and has a slight "V" contour that makes it more than capable of supporting big hands. The oil finish and the rolled-over fretboard edges give it the feel of an instrument you've played every day for 20 years. While providing enough meat for easy bending, the Dunlop 6230 fretwire is also low enough to maintain the Jazz'R's old-school playing vibe. The compound-radius fretboard—which is not as flat as on many Jacksons—feels just right, and the 25"-scale length provides string tension that is mid way between Fender and Gibson. And despite a few slightly irregular fret ends, the setup is very good. The guitar emerged from its case perfectly in tune, and you can feel the sweetness of the intonation throughout the entire instrument.

Adding to the comfort quotient is the fact that the semi-hollow Jazz'R weighs next to nothing. On a 45-minute show I practically forgot I was wearing it, and, even on a four-set gig, fatigue would not be a problem.

## Electrified

A sign of a great electric is a happening acoustic sound, and



A hollowed-out spruce Jazz'R body awaits its maple top.

the Jazz'R delivers in a big, big way. Hitting a chord, I was amazed at how loud and ringy it sounded—I have no doubt you could stick a mic in front of this instrument and record amazing "acoustic" tracks. Plugging in the Jazz'R, I was struck by how much of that acoustic quality came through the amp. (The guitar's designer, Jackson's Donnie Wade, strings his Jazz'R with phosphor bronze strings to bring out this characteristic.) The sound is open and detailed, and lends itself very well to fingerstyle passages and

arpeggiated lines. That explains the "Jazz" in the name—this guitar can definitely get into ES-335 or PRS hollowbody territory.


But the jazz moniker only tells a small part of what this instrument can do. I had no trouble playing a pop-rock gig that called for chimey clean tones, power chords, and distorted solos. The Jazz'R also absolutely ruled on a blues jam. The only thing that might take some players by surprise is the guitar's slightly understated tone. For better or worse, the Jazz'R isn't snotty or brash. It

25"-scale ebony-on-mahogany neck



Neck-through construction

1 1/16" nut width

The Ratings Game	Tone	Playability	Workmanship	Hardware	Vibe	Value
Jackson Swee-Tone Jazz'R SC 	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal = ♥ —————> Excellent = ♥♥♥♥♥



# Bench Tests

## Action Jackson

has a dignified, yet authoritative tone that emphasizes the smoky over the bright, and, man, does it sing! The combination of the hollow body, neck-through construction, and the Duncan SP-90 pickups allows the Jazz'R to drift effortlessly into sustain that somehow always seems to feed back on the fundamental of the note without howling or squealing.

Interestingly, the single-coil pickups do not feature a reverse wound/reverse polarity design, so there is no hum canceling in the middle position. The folks at Jackson say they tried it both ways, and they preferred the tone with

no hum canceling. Another curious design aspect is the control layout of two tones and a master volume, which prevents any of the cool tonal gradations possible by varying the volume blend of the pickups. (According to Jackson, this configuration was based on players' comments.)

## Jazz'R? I just me'R!

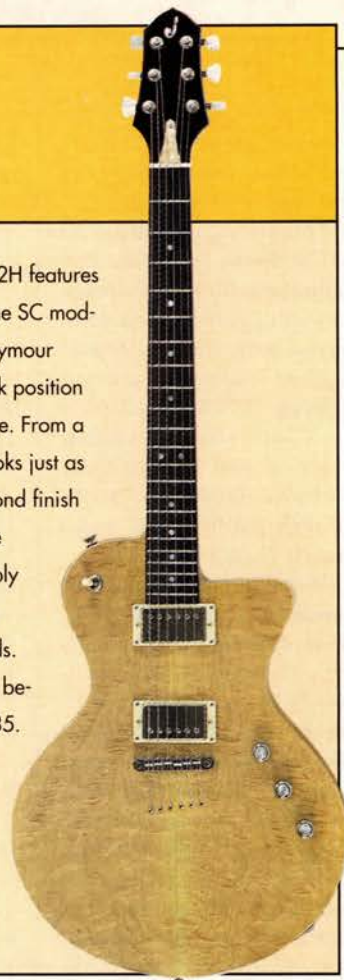
To put it simply, this is one spectacular guitar. Great workmanship and components, and a unique and gutsy vision add up to what Jackson claims they were striving for: "A valid tool for the player that is not a rehash." Like the Jazz'R, that's an understatement that says a great deal. Well done. ■

## Contact Info

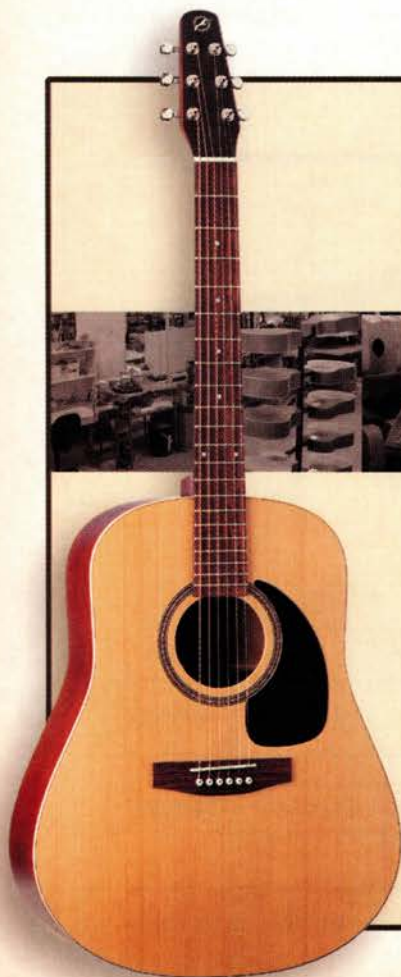
Jackson Guitars, 4710 Mercantile Dr., Fort Worth, TX 76137;  
(817) 831-9203; jacksonsguitars.com.

## Jackson Swee-Tone Jazz'R 2H

The two-humbucker Jazz'R 2H features the same construction as the SC model, with the exception of the Seymour Duncan Jazz pickup in the neck position and a Duncan '59 in the bridge. From a cosmetic standpoint, the 2H looks just as pretty with its hand-applied blond finish and nitro-cellulose lacquer. The Jazz'R 2H also plays as superbly as its single-coil sister, offering comfy chording and easy bends. Tonally, the 2H sits somewhere between a Les Paul and an ES-335. The lack of separate volume controls makes it impossible to get cool, two-pickup shadings, but this guitar sounds beautiful just the same. —MB



PAUL HAGGARD



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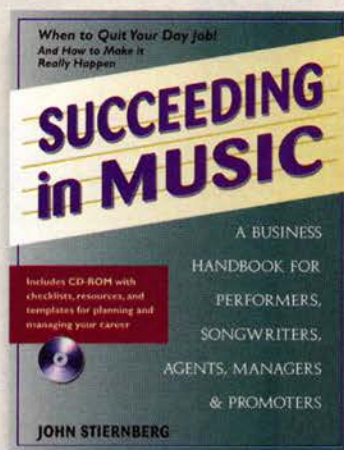
—JOHN CARLINI, performer, composer, teacher, producer, recording artist

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## Bench Tests

# Fab Filter Box

Roger Linn Design AdrenaLinn

By Joe Gore

Instrument designer Roger Linn insists he created the first digital drum machine as a handy stand-in for a real drummer, never dreaming that his Linn Drum Computer would

define the drum sounds of the '80s. And when he refined his ideas via Akai's MPC-series sampling sequencers, he had little inkling he was creating the near-universal groove tool of modern

### Snapshot

By triggering effects to its built-in drum machine, the AdrenaLinn (\$395) produces the sort of synchronized filter, modulation, and delay effects usually obtainable only via software sequencers. This ultra-unique pedal—which also features solid amp-modeling—wins an Editors' Pick Award.





# Bench Tests

## Fab Filter Box

hip-hop. But with his new guitar gizmo, Linn knows *exactly* what he's doing—capturing a thrilling assortment of beat-synchronized stereo effects in a compact and reasonably priced stomptbox.

By combining a digital effects processor with a drum machine, Roger Linn Design's AdrenaLinn Groove Filter FX + Amp Modeling + Drum Box (\$395) unleashes head-spinning flickers, burbles, sweeps, and whistles of a sort usually obtainable only via synthesizers or software sequencers.

And even veteran techno-tweakers will make exciting discoveries within seconds of plugging in.

## Basic Beats

The AdrenaLinn's drum machine is a no-frills affair: a simple four-voice beatbox with a 32-step sequencer and generic sounds. While you can conjure trippy effects by routing these sounds through the effects section, the drum box is probably best viewed as the rhythmic graph paper over which you sketch sounds. You can use the beats as backing while concocting rhythmic ef-

## Contact Info

Roger Linn Design, 1563 Solano Ave. #472, Berkeley, CA 94707; (510) 898-5433; rlinndesign.com.

fects, and then mute them during performance.

Thanks to the pedal's MIDI In and Out jacks, you can sync to an external sequencer, or clock a sequencer to the AdrenaLinn. You can also route the drum sounds and guitar effects to separate outputs—perfect for recording drum-free guitars while using the rhythm patterns as click tracks. Finally, you can simply plug in and jam, entering your tempo via footswitch. (In lieu of a tap-tempo switch, the

AdrenaLinn has a Hold Tempo function in which you set the speed by depressing the switch for an entire measure, as opposed to tapping in quarter-notes.)

## Sounds

It's difficult to summarize the AdrenaLinn's tones because its flexible modulation routing offers such an extraordinary array of options. You get warm delays, rich tremolo, and fat, tactile flanging—all synchable to tempo at

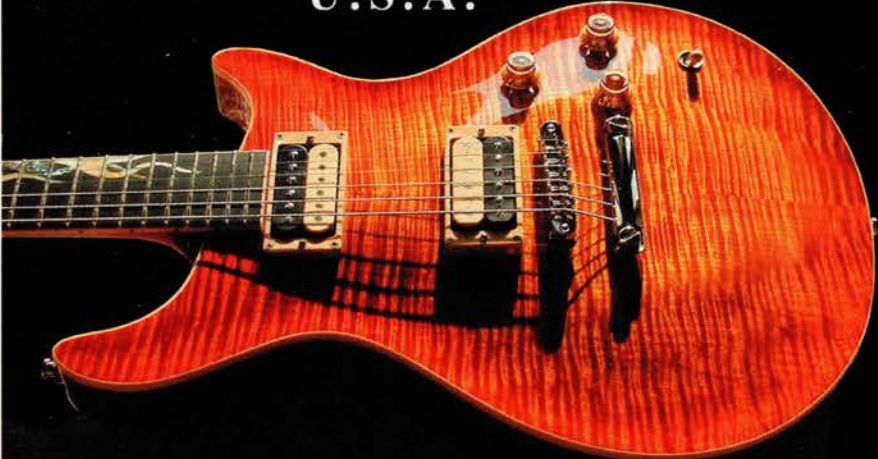
The Ratings Game	Sounds	Flexibility	Programmability	Ease of Use	Value
Roger Linn Design AdrenaLinn 	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal = ♥ —————> Excellent = ♥♥♥♥♥

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## Fab Filter Box

rates ranging from once every four bars to thirty-second-note triplets. All can be controlled by your playing dynamics, external MIDI control, or any of five LFO waveforms, including a random option. There are many fresh flavors here, such as envelope-driven flanging and random tremolo. But the biggest thrills reside in the filter section. Here you can select between two low-pass-filter types: a warm, Oberheim-style two-pole model, and an edgier, Moog-style four-pole—both with adjustable cutoff frequency, resonance, and attack and decay times.

It's no surprise that the AdrenaLinn excels at the two traditional auto-wah sounds: shim-

mering, LFO-driven sweeps and funky/quacky envelope filtering. But the pedal goes beyond such stompbox-filter stalwarts as the Moogerfooger and Mu-Tron III in offering a programmable, 32-step filter sequencer, with each step's cutoff adjustable on a scale of 0 to 99. You can create countless rhythm grooves, seizure-grade oscillations, and, at high-resonance settings, even sequenced melodies.

Sound cool? It certainly does. But there's more. The sequencer and other modulation sources can also control volume/tremolo, panning, and flanging effects. When you combine the complex filtering with delay and panning effects—well, it gets pretty deep. With these programs, a single strummed chord can generate a song idea.

The AdrenaLinn also offers a set of 12 amp models in the usual Fender, Marshall, Vox, and boutique flavors. The simulations are reasonably good, but there's little editing depth, and not even a choice of speaker type. While you can definitely get keeper tones by plugging straight into a mixer, many users may opt to bypass the AdrenaLinn's modeling in favor of analog amps or other modeling units. Like its drum machine, the AdrenaLinn's amp simulations are probably best viewed as nice side dishes rather than the main course. (One clever feature: You can place the effects before or after the modeling. Post-model flanging, for example, has a deliciously tape-like texture.)

## Ease of Use

There are two basic approaches to working with the AdrenaLinn: The easy way and the hard way. If you plan to build programs from scratch, expect to spend a lot of time toggling between parameters and squinting at tiny text. Aside from the small lights lining the edit grid, your sole visual feedback is a three-character LED display prone to bewildering abbreviations. Entering drum patterns and filter sequences is even more labor-intensive. You must toggle to the target step, and then dial in a numeric value. It's logical. It's workable. But it's not fun. (If you have Emagic's Sound Diver editing software, you can access all Adren-

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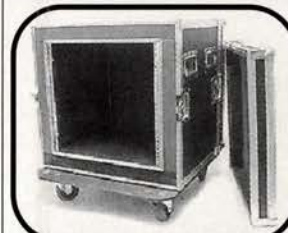


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aLinn parameters via a single computer screen.)

The easier method is to simply sift through the presets. This is an especially attractive way to work if you're synching to recorded tracks. I slaved the AdrenaLinn to a Pro Tools rig—a piece of cake—opened a song in progress, and simply spun the dials while noodling. I was rewarded with so many cool possibilities, I couldn't record them fast enough.

## Reaction Time

Cool as the AdrenaLinn is, a few extra features would have made it even cooler. A headphone jack is an odd omission, and there's no way to switch programs without using your hands or a MIDI controller pedal. The ability to recall a few favorite programs by footswitch à la the Line 6 modeler pedals would make the AdrenaLinn vastly more suitable for onstage use. (You can use the bypass switch to toggle between any two programs, but if both programs include effects, you sacrifice footswitch bypass.) A dry/effect mix control would have been welcome, as well.

Yet the AdrenaLinn would have nabbed our Editors' Pick Award even if it included no drum sounds or amp modeling. It's innovative, powerful, and reasonably priced—not to mention wicked, wicked fun. Only the unluckiest of guitarists will fail to wring compelling new sounds from this super-hip gizmo.



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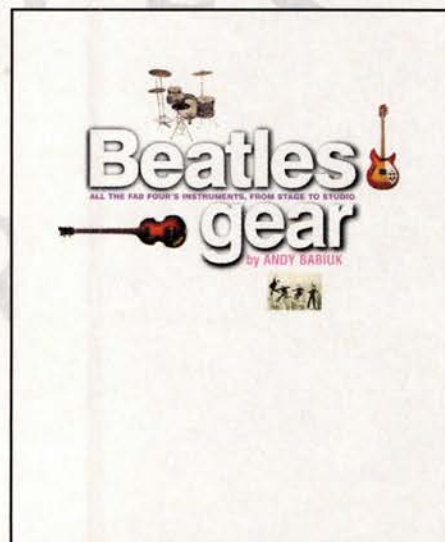


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# Bench Tests

# Above & Beyond

## Martin OMC-18VLJ Laurence Juber Signature Edition

By Art Thompson

**T**hough signature guitars are often little more than standard-issue models gussied up with gobs of cosmetics and an inlaid signature or two, the collaboration between a gifted player and a great builder *can* lead to the creation of something truly spectacular. Such is the case with the Martin OMC-18VLJ Laurence Juber Signature Edition (\$4,449), which, though very understated in appearance, is an extraordinary instrument in terms of tone and playability.

A signature model from a major outfit such as Martin is a big deal for any player, and it's clear that fingerstylist Laurence Juber seized the opportunity to create a guitar that would reflect his no-nonsense approach to music. The OMC-18VLJ is so purpose minded, in fact, that it doesn't even have his name inlaid on it—just a signed tag on the inside. The abalone ornamentation

### Snapshot

Co-designed by fingerstyle wizard

Laurence Juber, the Martin OMC-18VLJ Laurence Juber Signature Edition (\$4,449) is a superb-sounding acoustic that redefines the ideal of what an artist model should be. This astonishing yet refreshingly unpretentious guitar gets an Editors' Pick Award.





# Bench Tests

## Above & Beyond

is limited to just three small dots on the ebony fretboard, and the body is modestly trimmed in black/white and tortoise-shell-colored bindings. The two-piece arched back is simply divided by a thin black purfling strip, and the heel is capped with a small piece of polished ebony. Everything about this guitar is elegantly minimalist.

The OMC-18VLJ's headstock is squared and tapered in classic Martin fashion, and also features a polished headplate. On the flip side is a diamond volute that

strengthens the transition into the glass-smooth, modified-V-shaped neck. The 20 standard frets are nicely crowned, polished, and trimmed, and your hand just glides across their carefully finished ends. The open-gear Waverly tuners are smooth and precise, and their "butterbean"-style buttons and nickel plating lend a mellow vintage vibe. The clean-looking ebony bridge features a compensated, radiused bone saddle and pearl-dotted string pins.

Interior details are right in line with the superb exterior craftsmanship. The top braces are 1/4"

## Contact Info

The Martin Guitar Co., Box 329, Nazareth, PA 18064; (800) 345-3103; [martinguitar.com](http://martinguitar.com).

scalloped Adirondack spruce, and they follow the pattern used by Martin on the OM-28 Long Scale guitar. The back braces are well shaped and sanded, and their ends snug up tightly into the kerfed wooden strip that reinforces the back/side junction. The neck is glued in using a classic dovetail joint—no bolts needed.

## Sounds and Playability

With its wide-ish neck, butter-smooth frets, and rounded fingerboard edges, the OMC-18VLJ

plays like a dream. In fact, this guitar feels so good in your hands that it's almost beyond description. The ultra-light body and neutral balance reinforce the notion that you're playing something of uncanny grace and delicacy. The cutaway makes it easy to glide to the high frets, and the low action and stock, light-gauge Martin SP Plus 3100 strings ensure minimal finger exertion. If you play with a light touch, you'll love how this guitar feels.

The dynamic response is also

The Ratings Game	Tone	Playability	Workmanship	Materials	Vibe	Value
Martin OMC-18VLJ 	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

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## Above & Beyond

superb. Pluck the strings softly with bare fingers, and notes shimmer and blossom as the woods spring to life. The bass is round, full, and deep—even at very low volumes—and the highs are crisp and clear. As you push the strings harder, a gentle feeling of compression begins to work its sustainful magic. Chords sing with choir-like harmony, and even the strings you're *not* plucking seem to be adding harmonic support.

The OMC-18VLJ gets up to full volume easily, yet you can pound the strings quite hard without noticing any dynamic cave-ins. In fact, one of the nicest qualities of the OMC-18VLJ is how balanced it sounds. There are no exaggerated frequencies, and no matter how you attack the strings, you get a rich, enveloping sound that brings out the best in your playing. One can only imagine how the OMC-18VLJ might improve with age and a lot of playing time.

So what's *not* to like about the OMC-18VLJ? Nothing, except perhaps the lofty price, as this is easily the finest new Martin we've ever played. A fingerstylist's dream come true, this agile instrument is a hand-crafted work of art that was designed to be *played*, not displayed. The Martin company and Laurence Juber deserve a big hand for creating such an exceptional guitar. This is going to be a tough act to follow!

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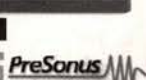
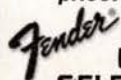
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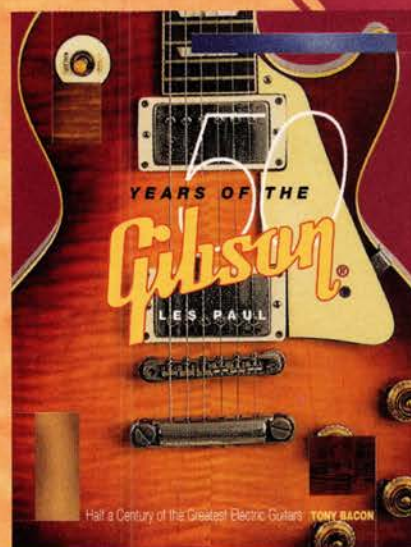
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# Exotica

## Turner Model 1C-P Custom

By Jude Gold

**F**ew guitar makers blend the past with the present as successfully as Rick Turner. His distinctive solidbody electrics evoke the graceful curves and ornate detailing of 19th-century parlor guitars, yet feature electronics that are entirely contemporary. Like the 175-year-old Johann Stauffer acoustic that inspired Turner's designs, the Model 1C-P (\$4,600) is almost entirely handmade—right down to its humbucking and piezo pickup systems.

Uncase the 1C-P, and a glow radiates from the stunning quilted-maple top. It's only 1/8" thick, yet from certain angles it looks holographic—like a chunk of sandy beach you can almost touch. The wood's natural luminescence is enhanced by a special oil treatment that's applied just before lacquering, and even the 1C-P's dark mahogany body shines beneath the finish. Securing the "parlor" aesthetic is a striking, laminated-wood purfling that surrounds the instrument. Other nice touches include a tasteful Brazilian rosewood overlay on the headstock and ebony buttons on the Schaller tuners.

From the very first note I played, the 1C-P sounded resonant and present—and I hadn't even plugged it in yet. The 24<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"-scale set neck is extremely rigid, allowing the Thomastik Power-Bright .011s to transmit vibration efficiently into the body. Plugging the 1C-P into a Matchless Chieftain 2x12 combo, I proceeded to make the neighbors pay. The plan

*Continued on page 142*





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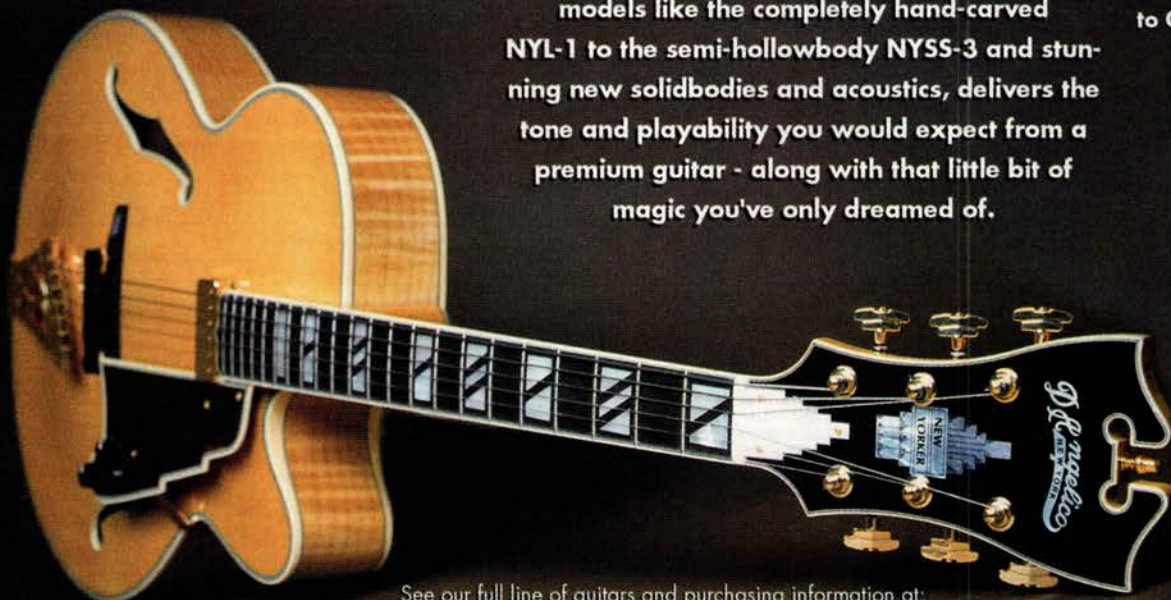


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# Reviews A Telemaster's Lost Tracks

## AUDIO



### Danny Gatton

*Runnin' Wild: The Renegade Years, 1981-1988*

**W**hen it comes to unsung guitar heroes, it's hard not to sing the praises of Danny Gatton. (He was, after all, the guy who appeared on the cover of *Guitar Player* in a mask, with a headline that read *Unknown Greats*.) His album *The Humbler*—long available only as a bootleg—is one of the Holy Grails of guitar playing, although few fans heard it at the time of its release. After Gatton's tragic death in 1994, it seemed he was destined to remain unknown and unappreciated.

Well, Renegade Records is trying to change all that. Hot on the heels of *Danny Gatton and Robert Gordon: Capitol Attack* (reviewed in the Sept. 2001 *GP*), Renegade is putting out *Danny Gatton Runnin' Wild* [available at [renegade@netease.net](mailto:renegade@netease.net)]*—*a limited edition, 4-CD box set with an accompanying 30-page booklet. The discs chronicle Gatton's "lost years" between 1981 and 1988. During this time,



"My attention span is fairly short," said Gatton in the March '89 *GP*. "I can't play just one thing and be satisfied."

Gatton recorded hundreds of tracks for rockabilly impresario Billy Poore. Many of these songs showcase Gatton's stellar sideman skills as he backs up a variety of singers with tasty comp-

ing. Then, of course, there are plenty of tracks that highlight his out-of-this-world chops as he cuts loose with head-spinning solos that seamlessly blend a dozen styles at once.

Disc 1—studio tracks from 1981 to 1983—opens with the title track and finds Gatton doing his best Les Paul imitation with celestial lines recorded at half-speed, and then sped up into the



# Reviews

stratosphere. He works his slap-back magic on "Rockabilly Giddyup," "Uptown," and Buddy Holly's "I'm Gonna Set My Foot Right Down," and he kicks every available ass on the aptly titled "Guitar Boogie Shuffle."

The second disc chronicles Gatton's work in '85 and '86. These tracks have Gatton wearing a variety of musical hats, including distorted rock on "Take a Chance on Rock'n'Roll," (which sounds as if it was transferred from a warped vinyl record), disco on "Mean Streak," country rock on "Memphis Medley," and soul/funk with "My Baby Gives Me Too Much to Eat." His rhythm pocket is as big as all outdoors on every cut, and his solos are always on the verge of getting out of control—exciting, unpredictable, and a little scary.

Disc 3 has Gatton sporting a skinny, compressed tone for his super-slick double-stop sorties on 1986's "I Ain't Feeling Sorry for You." He cranks out Hawaiian-sounding, faux-pedal-steel bends in the Elvis-esque "Come on and Stay with Me Girl," and fills "Burn That Candle," to the brim with fat-toned, Western swing-style lead lines. It's Gatton's work on the previously unreleased instrumental "Oh No!" that is the real showstopper on this disc, though. Here he really opens up his bag of tricks and throws down lick after killer lick, showing off not only his superb technique but also his sense of humor. The only drag about "Oh No!" is the sub-par recording quality.

The last disc in this collection contains live tracks culled from Gatton gigs and sit-ins from '81 to '88. Again, the recording quality varies wildly, but these performances provide a very real, fly-on-the-wall experience of what it must have been like to walk into some dive club and witness

a guitar legend. And, like always, the playing is consistently brilliant. The last cut is an interview in which Gatton dissects his tone and playing technique. This is a fascinating glimpse of Gatton's philosophy on gear and the music business, and the licks he peels off to illustrate his points are more than cool.

This box set is mainly for diehard Gattonheads. The inconsistent sound and levels—not to mention the \$175 price tag—will make it a tough-sell for the Danny-Come-Lately crowd. But for loyal fans, this is a no-brainer. All told, there are about five hours of music, and most of the 86 tracks have never been released before. There are only 1,000 copies of *Runnin' Wild*—many of which have already been snatched up—so act now if you want one. **Renegade.** —MATT BLACKETT



## Ana Popovic

*hush!*

Yugoslavian-born Ana Popovic is not only a superb singer and songwriter, but also a very capable guitarist who can flatpick fluid jazz lines, craft deep-pocket slide grooves, and bend strings with SRV-style emotion. Produced in Memphis by the legendary Jim Gaines, *hush!* is a hard-hitting album that reflects Popovic's passion for American blues, rock, and jazz. She has a unique way of melding

these influences, however, and with her talent and chops, Popovic seems poised to shake things up here as effectively as she has in Europe for the last few years. **Ruf.** —ART THOMPSON



## The Full Nine

*The Full Nine*

The debut album from this Toronto-based quartet slams the senses with a potent dose of sledgehammer rock infused with industrial grind, tinges of psychedelia, and arcing vocal

## QUICKHITS

**Jody Williams, *Return of a Legend*.** A key Chicago session guitarist in the '50s, Williams comes back armed with a tone and style that'll turn your head around. **Evidence.** —AT

**Son Seals, *Deluxe Edition*.** This excellent compilation cherry picks from eight albums to spotlight Seals' wrenching guitar style, great songwriting, and explosive delivery. **Alligator.** —AT

**Flogging Molly, *Drunken Lullabies*.** Flogging Molly takes no prisoners with their unique Irish folk/punk blend. Riverdance be damned! **Side One Dummy.** —DF

**The Promise Ring, *Woodwater*.** On their fifth full-length record, indie-rock vets the Promise Ring sport strong tunes and beautifully understated guitar tones. **Anti.** —DF

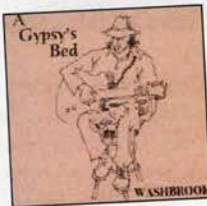
**Various artists, *Guitars for Freedom*.** Donating all proceeds to NYC disaster relief, this CD includes tracks from Steve Vai, Carlos Santana, Allan Holdsworth, Albert Lee, and Buckethead. **Angels on Earth.** —MM

**Chris Dunnett *El Samuraichi*.** Flamenco- and classical-flavored originals delivered by a fleet-fingered master technician. **chrisdunnett.com.** —SH



**Planet X *Live from Oz*.** Frightful chops—courtesy of guitarist Tony MacAlpine—showcased without those pesky, time-wasting vocals. **InsideOut America.** —SH

**Soulive *Doin' Something*.** Treat your woofers to some deep-pocket, organ-trio funk, as guitarist Eric Krasno trades licks with B-3 captain Neal Evans. **Blue Note.** —JG



**Rick Washbrook *A Gypsy's Bed*.** This two-CD tribute to the late, great Lenny Breau features stirring nylon-string, steel-string, electric, and 12-string performances. Detailed liner notes tie each track to specific aspects of the Breau style. **washbrook.com.** —JG



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1. To enter: You may enter by printing your name and address on the official entry card or on a postcard and mailing it to *Guitar Player/The Drool-Worthy D'Angelico Giveaway*, PO Box 58590 Boulder, CO 80322-8590 or online at [HTTP://www.guitarplayer.com](http://www.guitarplayer.com) beginning approximately March 5, 2002. Entries must be received by April 30, 2002. Enter as often as you wish (as often as once per day online), but each entry must be separately postmarked. Copies, mechanically reproduced, or automated entries, and computer-aided or computer-generated script entries will not be eligible and are void. The sponsor of this game is United Entertainment Media, Inc. ("Sponsor"), and such Sponsor is not responsible for printing or typographical errors in any sweepstakes-related materials, late, lost, or misdirected mail or transactions that are lost, fail to enter into the processing system or are processed or transmitted late.

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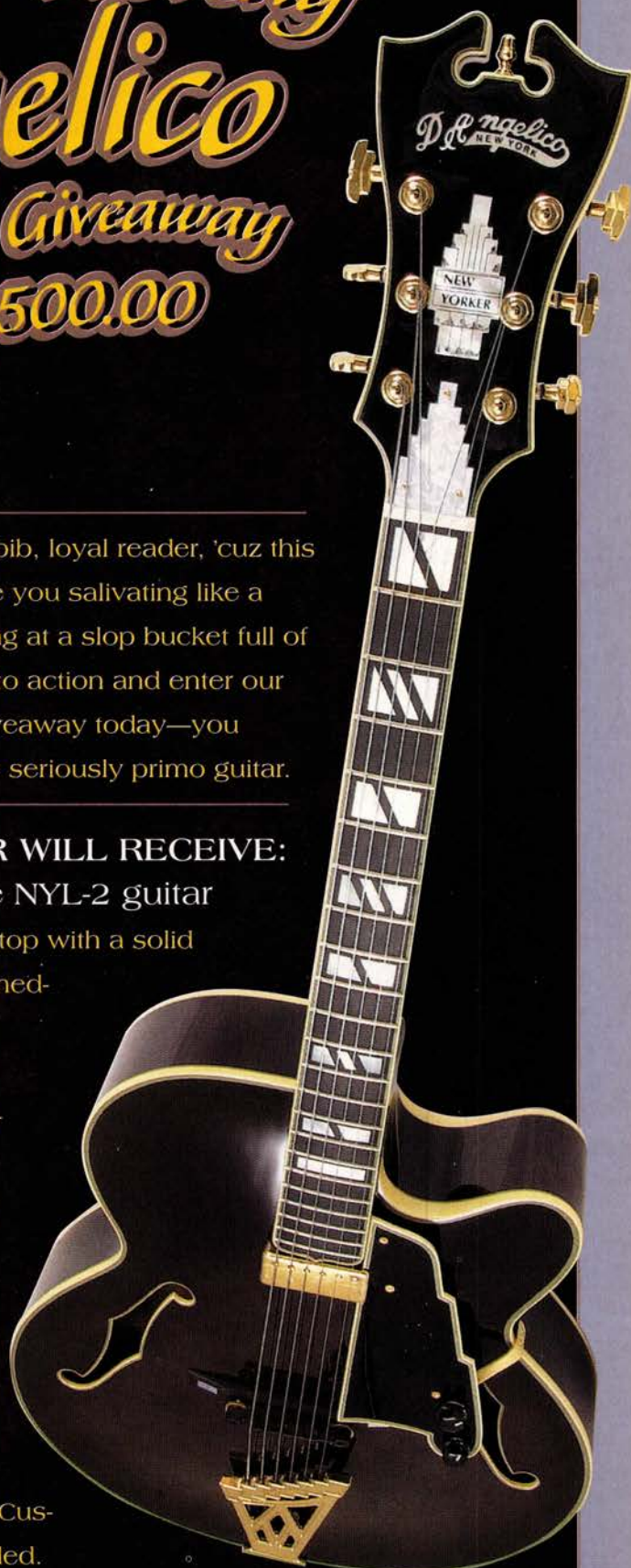
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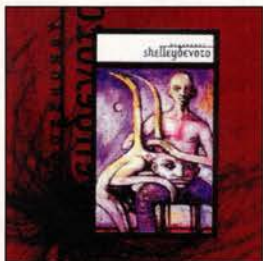
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## Reviews

harmonies. Guitarists/songwriters Rob Langhans and Dave Dunlop craft tsunami-sized grooves that push the music—which can be described as vibrantly moody or hauntingly exhilarating—with car-crushing force. Sly harmonic shifts and clever melodic excursions give the Full Nine the edge they need to stand out from the crowd of heavy-handed chugsters. **Mammoth.**

—ART THOMPSON



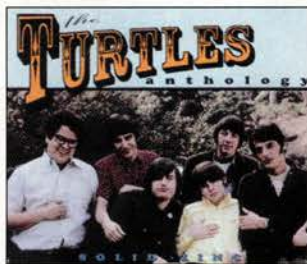
### Shelley/Devoto

*Buzzkunst*

The title of this home-studio collaboration between once-and-future Buzzcock Pete Shelley and ex-Buzzcock Howard Devoto is a less-than-subtle giggle at the band that made them famous. For the most part, *Buzzkunst* is a trip back to '80s new wave, and it's a rather pleasant

journey. Laced with keyboard drones and tinkles, ambient-jazz drum and sax loops, and the odd twisted riff, the album is practically a chill-room manifesto. Still, Shelley and Devoto *do* unleash a few feverishly manic solos and distorted, Buzzcocks-esque rhythm punctuations. If you can hang with the atmosphere, you'll surely find snippets of inspiration that only artsy bizarros such as these cats can provide. The good stuff is worth the wait. **SpinART/Cooking Vinyl.**

—MICHAEL MOLEND



### The Turtles

*Solid Zinc: The Turtles Anthology*

Sure, the catchy intro to "Happy Together" and the upbeat stabs of "She'd Rather Be with Me" are joyful guitar moments, but, let's face it, you don't dig the Turtles for kick-ass riffs. The blissful songwriting, soaring arrangements, and incredibly lush background vocals make

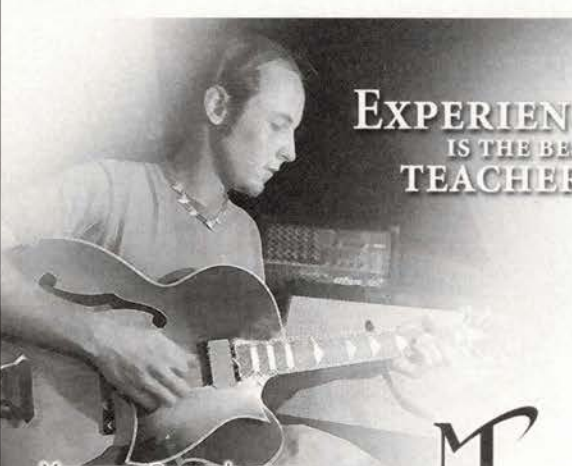
this band an off-the-radar lucky charm for your bag of tricks. After all, unique and transcendent guitar playing often finds inspiration in non-guitar approaches, and this double-CD release holds a galaxy of creative ideas. You could craft an ambient-guitar masterwork by simply stealing a lick or two from the vocal orchestrations. (Turtles' leaders Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman did the sublimely strange background vocals on T. Rex's *Electric Warrior* and they also worked with Frank Zappa.) Trip out and go forth! **Rhino.**

—MICHAEL MOLEND

### Clinic

*Walking With Thee*

Critical acclaim doesn't always add up to critically important music. In the case of masked Liverpudlians Clinic, however, the press adulation is well deserved. The group's intellectual garage rock fuses so many disparate elements that, even though know you've heard something like it before, you can't quite put your finger on why Clinic sounds so refreshing. *Walking With Thee* continues in the same vein as 2000's *Internal Wrangler*. In fact, *Walking* sounds like it could have come from the same sessions with its brooding vocals, robotic rhythms, and downright evil-sounding tunes. Although *Walking With Thee* is not a "guitar" album in the classic sense, haunting clean-toned figures permeate



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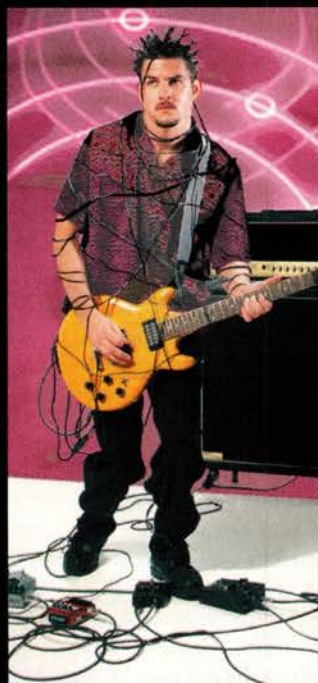
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## Reviews

every bar of the record. Clinic proves that the guitar is there to forward the greater good of the music. **Domino.** —DARRIN FOX

### The Nels Cline Singers

*Instrumentals*

Very quietly—or *not* so quietly, Nels Cline has become the crown prince of avant-garde guitar. His constant gigging, recording, and undying spirit have made him the leader of a genre that, by its very nature, is doomed to ride the outskirts of the music biz. Their loss. On *Instrumentals*, Cline roams freely in the guitar,

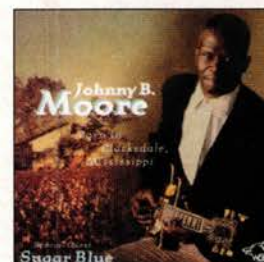
bass, and drums format that allows him to fully do his thing: freaky looping, dissonant shards of notes, speed metal rave-ups, and a killer bluesy excursion on the tune "Lowered Boom." Hell, with a list like that, you're probably asking yourself, "What's not to like?" My sentiments exactly. **Cryptogramophone.** —DARRIN FOX

### Big Head Todd and the Monsters

*Riviera*

Todd Park Mohr & Co.'s first studio album in five years finds the band still churning out the grooving, soulful blues-rock that made them underground heroes, and eventually

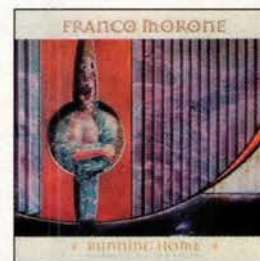
drove their 1993 debut to platinum status. Although Mohr can clearly wail—as evidenced by the solos on "Freedom Fighter," "Gary Indiana Blues," and "Universal Mom"—he obviously adheres to a "songs come first" mantra. However, *Riviera* is somewhat lacking in song hooks, leaving you to wish Mohr had expounded more on the many brief-but-glorious guitar moments. **Big Records.** —SHAWN HAMMOND



### Johnny B. Moore

*Born in Clarksdale, Mississippi*

It's not often you pick up a contemporary blues release that sounds like it's straight out of Chicago, circa 1950. But the 52-year-old Moore (who really was born in Clarksdale) and his dry-toned Les Paul crank out gritty tones and down-home grooves that are downright refreshing in their antiquity. The Mississippi native plays 11 covers by the likes of Elmore James, Robert Johnson, Willie Dixon, and Charley Patton, as well as his original "Legends of the Blues"—a laidback acoustic shuffle with John Lee Hooker-style singing and wailing harmonicas. Moore clearly knows what the blues is about, and he could easily teach upcoming blues wunderkinds a lesson or two about feel. **Wolf.** —SHAWN HAMMOND



### Franco Morone

*Running Home*

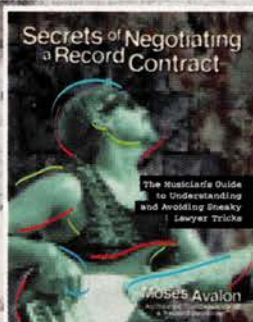
If a lone steel-string can tell a story, then Italy's Franco Morone might as well be J.R.R. Tolkien. Your ears will hang on every note as he effortlessly weaves lyrical melodies into huge fingerstyle textures. Using Taylor, Kevin Ryan, and RainSong acoustics, and a bouquet of open tunings, Morone reminds you how truly boundless the fretboard is. Plus, Morone's intonation is perfect, and although his chops are monstrous, they never distract from the music. And, in a nice gesture toward his fellow guitarists, Morone not only lists which guitar

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- Check or money order for \$30.00 per song (U.S. currency only) payable to John Lennon Songwriting Contest. If paying by credit card, \$30.00 per song will be charged to your account.

Entries must be postmarked no later than September 28, 2002.

Please read all rules carefully, and then sign your name in the space provided. If entrant is under 18 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.

1. Each song submitted must be contestant's original work. Songs may not exceed five (5) minutes in length. No song previously recorded and released through major national distribution in any country will be eligible. Songs may have multiple co-writers, but please designate one name only on the application. Contestant may submit as many songs in as many categories as he/she wishes, but each entry requires a separate cassette, entry form, lyric sheet, and entrance fee. One check or money order for multiple entries/categories is permitted. (Entrance fee is non-refundable. JLSC is not responsible for late, lost, damaged, misdirected, postage due, stolen, or misappropriated entries.)

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5. Winners will be notified by mail and must sign and return an affidavit of eligibility/recording rights/publicity release within 14 days of notification date. The affidavit will state that winner's song is original work and he/she holds all rights to song. Failure to sign and return such affidavit within 14 days or provision of false/inaccurate information therein will result in immediate disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Affidavits of winners under 18 years of age at time of award must be countersigned by parent or legal guardian. Affidavits subject to verification by JLSC and its agents. Entry constitutes permission to use winners names, likenesses, and voices for future advertising and publicity purposes without additional compensation.
6. Winners will be determined by January 15, 2003, after which each entrant will receive a list of winners in the mail. CDs, Cassettes and lyrics will not be returned.

I have read and understand the rules of the John Lennon Songwriting Contest and I accept the terms and conditions of participation. (If entrant is under 18 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.)

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

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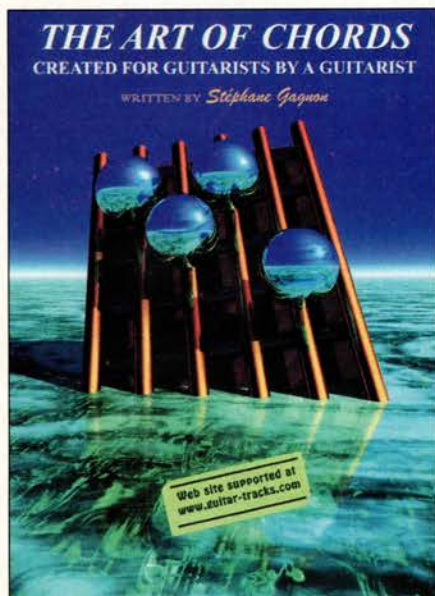


## Reviews

you're hearing on a given song, he also provides the tuning. For example, if you're dazzled by the galloping title track, try your hand at its *D, A, D, G, G, D* tuning. Or, see if you can generate glorious layered melodies with *E, A, D, E, C#*, *D*, as Morone does on "Picking the Joys of Life." If you dig Adrian Legg, Michael Hedges, or Josh White, you'll love *Running Home*. Acoustic Music Records.

—JUDE GOLD

## PRINT



### The Art of Chords

By Stéphane Gagnon

When you're trying to become a better soloist, the goal is usually freedom—you strive to soar like an eagle across the fretboard. If you wish to know how to build chords up and down the neck, however, it's best to be "CAGED"—that is, able to generate any chord from the five basic open-position shapes: *C, A, G, E*, and *D*. If you're unfamiliar with the approach, *The Art of Chords* was written for you. Sure, it contains a zillion fingerings for nearly every chord under the sun, but Gagnon's infectious love for anything chord or interval related makes this a chord dictionary with a pulse. The only breaks in the action are engaging pop quizzes that test your ability to "cage" your chords. A couple of Gagnon's terms are confusing at first—namely, referring to some shapes as "ascending" and others as "descending," depending on where the low root is situated—but, in general, the author succeeds in making what would be steep learning a fun, smooth ride. In Time Music.

—JUDE GOLD

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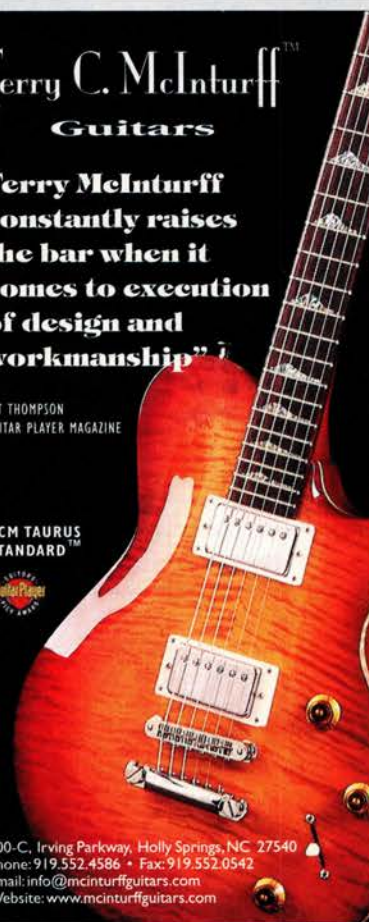
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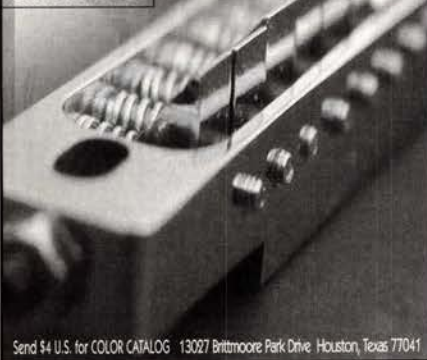
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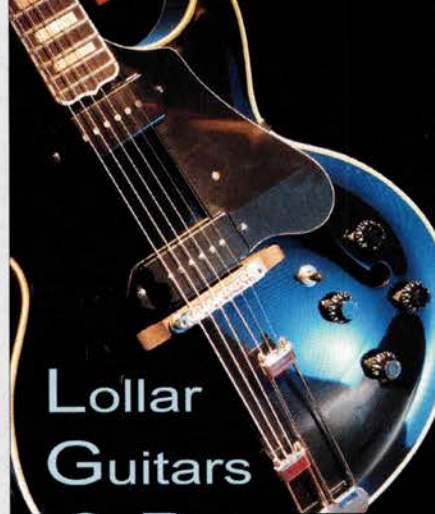
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## Pentatonic Ladders

BY PATHIK DESAI



### IF YOU WERE ASKED TO SOLO

in *B* minor, what would you do? Most guitarists would jump to the seventh position and play within the *B* minor-pentatonic box shown in Ex. 1. Advanced players might also re-finger the scale at other positions on the neck. As comfy as these vertical shapes are, however, they can be stylistic traps, limiting you to generic leads and stock riffs. Why not break out of these boxes by learning to solo in a *linear* fashion?

Ex. 2 is also a *B* minor-pentatonic scale, but it starts at the 2nd fret and moves up the neck through all five scale positions, using a melodic

sequence and just two strings. Like a ladder ascending through five floors of a building, this approach carries you horizontally up the fretboard, allowing you to step off at any "floor"—that is, box position—you choose.

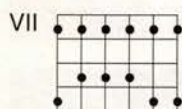
To make your melodic ladders sound smooth and musical, try incorporating slurs. Using hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slides, Ex. 3 catapults you up to the ninth position in a hurry. Move on to Ex. 4, and hear how string skips create rich intervals and give your solos an angular, unpredictable sound.

Finally, with all of these concepts in mind, try building ladders from other scales. A good

starting place is *B* Dorian, because it's simply *B* minor pentatonic with two additional notes—*C*# and *G*#. To see how a *B*-Dorian ladder nails the tastiest chord tones in a *Bm*9-*E*9 progression, try Ex. 5. This is our first *downward* ladder, and it uses a succession of descending sevenths. Take it from such ladder pros as Eric Johnson, Steve Lukather, and George Benson: Working ladders into your playing gives your solos *lift*.

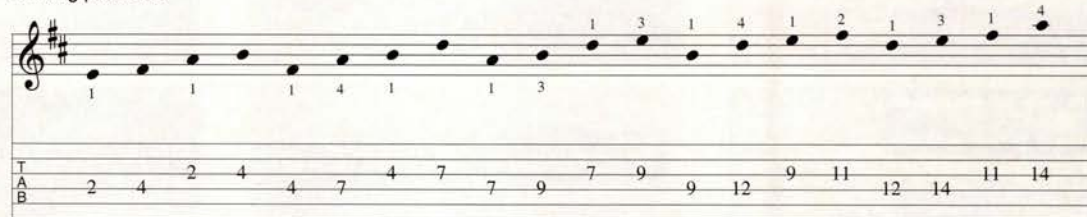
*G.I.T. instructor Pathik Desai is an L.A.-based session player and touring musician. Contact him at [lpdesai@earthlink.net](mailto:lpdesai@earthlink.net).*

Ex. 1



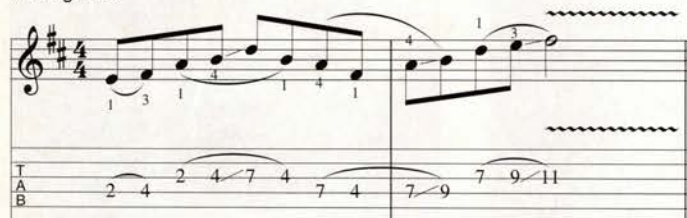
Ex. 2

Shifting positions



Ex. 3

Adding slurs



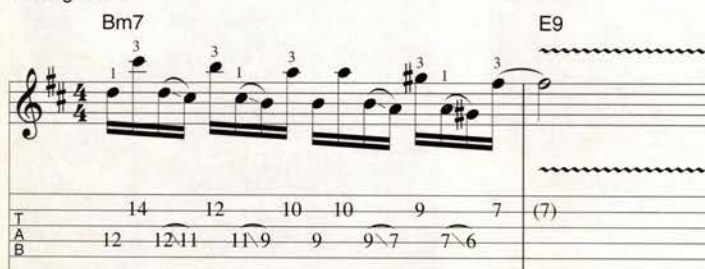
Ex. 4

Skipping strings



Ex. 5

Adding notes





# Double-Stop Blues

BY JUDE GOLD



**WHEN IT COMES TO IN-**venting exciting new riffs, textures, and grooves, guitarists fluent in more than one style have an advantage. After all, when inspired musicians combine traditions, entire new genres can be the result. (Where do you think rockabilly, soul jazz, hard bop, neo-classical, and fusion came from?) With this in mind, let's throw some hot-country double-stops at a blues in G, and see if we can create a refreshing new groove.

Start with the bluesy grip in Ex. 1a. For decades, guitarists have been squeezing these two notes over 12-bar shuffles in G.

Chicken-pickers, however, might play this double-stop as a repeating pull-off, anchoring it with a G on the fourth string, as in Ex. 1b. Try using a hybrid pick-and-fingers approach, plucking the diads with your middle and ring fingers, and the low notes with your pick. Accent the plucked notes, not the open strings. Trade the shuffle beat for a driving, Albert Lee-flavored two-step, and this lick really boogies.

Next, heat things up by making Ex. 1b's double-stop descend chromatically within the riff (Ex. 2). The phrasing is the same as in Ex. 1b, but the changing shapes require some re-fingering within the mea-

sure. It's tricky at first, but easy once you learn the moves. Work up to speed, and you have an exhilarating one-bar loop you can play over the I7 chord (G7) in our 12-bar blues-a-billy tune.

Now, we just need IV7 and V7 flavors. Ex. 3 loops nicely over the IV7 (C7), and features a low C tethered to a shifting tritone on the third and fourth strings. Its syncopated rhythm is identical to Ex. 2's, but the moves are simpler. Finally, to nail the V7 (D7), try Ex. 4. The basic grips are the same as those in Ex. 2, only they're transposed up to the twelfth position, and there are some fun 12th-fret hammers on the open D string.

Plug these one-bar phrases into a standard 12-bar blues, and you have a twangy, action-packed approach to a timeless genre. But don't stop there. Rearrange these riffs any way you like. Or, for a meatier, less knuckle-busting feel, try them over a slow funk groove with swung sixteenths. There's no wrong way to tweak a lick, nor are there any two styles of music you can't combine. The only crime is losing your inspiration to do so.

Ex. 1a



Ex. 1b



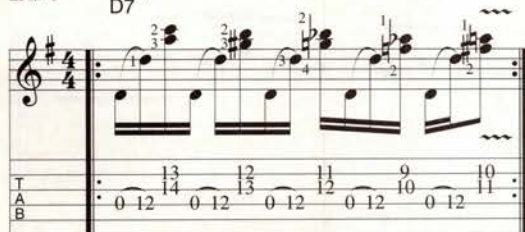
Ex. 2



Ex. 3



Ex. 4



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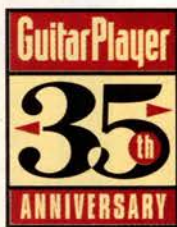




## CLASSIC COLUMN

# Know Your Neighbors

BY ARNIE BERLE




### ONE OF THE BEST

ways to add variety to a solo is to utilize neighboring notes, found above and below each chord tone. The lower neighbor is the note one half-step below the chord tone, and the upper neighbor is the next scale tone above. The following examples demonstrate lower and upper neighbors, and are based on the I-VI-II-V progression in C. First,

carefully analyze each phrase in Ex. 1, and practice playing neighbor tones in all major-7th, minor-7th, and dominant-7th harmonies. Then, try adding lower and upper neighbor tones in various combinations to a Cmaj7chord (Ex. 2).

Next, learn to embellish scales with neighbor tones. Ex. 3 provides two patterns based on the C major scale. Once you have a few sequences with neighboring notes under your fingers, apply them to a progression. To get you started, Ex. 4 provides a few lines for the I-VI-II-V progression.



Arnie Berle, a professor of music at Mercy College in New York, has written nearly 200 articles for GP. This one was originally published in 1984. 

### Ex. 1

Cmaj7 (with lower neighbors)

Cmaj7 (with upper neighbors)

Am7 (with lower neighbors)

Am7 (with upper neighbors)

Dm7 (with lower neighbors)

Dm7 (with upper neighbors)

G7 (with lower neighbors)

G7 (with upper neighbors)

### Ex. 2

Cmaj7

Cmaj7



Ex. 3 Cmaj7

Cmaj7

Ex. 4

## READER'S CHALLENGE • SURF RAGA

**IF DICK DALE AND RAVI SHANKAR GOT TOGETHER** and jammed, the air might be filled with cool, vibey riffs such as this one, sent in by Ivan Pongracic of Hillsdale, Michigan. "Except for the very the last note, it's played entirely on the fifth string, and it has a modal, Arabian sound," says Pongracic. He soaks this lick in an ocean of spring reverb, and plays it at a gal-

loping tempo. "It's a good single-string exercise, and—because of all the pinky hammers and pulls—it makes a great fretting-hand workout as well."

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## Pedal-Point Comping

BY PINO MARRONE



### GUITARISTS SPEND SO MUCH

time sharpening their lead playing that they often forget how exciting it is to be an accompanist. Ironically, if you *do* build comping skills, you'll have a head start on one of the most challenging lead-guitar styles of all: chord melody. The trick is to keep evolving by learning new approaches to harmony. For instance, try your hand at the hypnotic

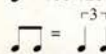
device known as *pedal point*.

To achieve pedal point, simply hold a low note—or *pedal tone*—beneath a series of shifting chords. This is a great way to add tension and vibe to chord progressions, and jazz pianists and bassists have been exploiting this effect for decades. On guitar, however, the fingerings can be demanding, so warm up your hands, get a hybrid pick-and-fingers approach

going (or drop the pick altogether), and check out Ex. 1a. First, with a swinging feel, play just the C pedal in the lower voice. Then, try it again, adding the chords. Learn to handle these wide grips, and you'll have a hip new way to play a II-V-I progression in F. To create an intriguing sense of suspended time, try phrasing the chords in a three-beat feel against the underlying 4/4 groove, as in Ex. 1b.

### Ex. 1a

♩ = 100-120



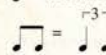
Ex. 1a is a musical score for guitar in 4/4 time, featuring a II-V-I progression in F major. The score is divided into four measures, each with a corresponding photograph of a hand playing the guitar. Red arrows point from the photographs to the specific chords in the score.

- Measure 1:** Chord (IIIm7) Gm11/C. The photograph shows the left hand holding a low C note on the 1st fret, 3rd string, while the right hand plays the Gm11/C chord.
- Measure 2:** Chord (V7) C13b9. The photograph shows the left hand holding the same low C note, while the right hand plays the C13b9 chord.
- Measure 3:** Chord (I) Fmaj7/C. The photograph shows the left hand holding the same low C note, while the right hand plays the Fmaj7/C chord.
- Measure 4:** The photograph shows the left hand holding the same low C note, while the right hand plays a final chord.

The score includes a bass line with a steady 8th-note pulse in the left hand and a treble line with a melodic line in the right hand. The bass line is marked with 'T', 'A', and 'B' for the thumb, index, and middle fingers respectively.

### Ex. 1b

♩ = 100-120



Ex. 1b is a musical score for guitar in 4/4 time, featuring a II-V-I progression in F major. The score is divided into four measures, each with a corresponding photograph of a hand playing the guitar. Red arrows point from the photographs to the specific chords in the score.

- Measure 1:** Chord Gm11/C. The photograph shows the left hand holding a low C note on the 1st fret, 3rd string, while the right hand plays the Gm11/C chord.
- Measure 2:** Chord C13b9. The photograph shows the left hand holding the same low C note, while the right hand plays the C13b9 chord.
- Measure 3:** Chord Fmaj7/C. The photograph shows the left hand holding the same low C note, while the right hand plays the Fmaj7/C chord.
- Measure 4:** Chord F6/9. The photograph shows the left hand holding the same low C note, while the right hand plays the F6/9 chord.

The score includes a bass line with a steady 8th-note pulse in the left hand and a treble line with a melodic line in the right hand. The bass line is marked with 'T', 'A', and 'B' for the thumb, index, and middle fingers respectively.



Pianists such as Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, and Keith Jarrett broke new ground by taking liberties with chord qualities while vamping over a pedal tone. Ex. 2 presents a slick way for you to do the same thing on guitar. Try using these kaleidoscopic changes as a vamp in the key of D minor, or as a substitute for the typical Dm7-Em7b5-A7 section of standards such

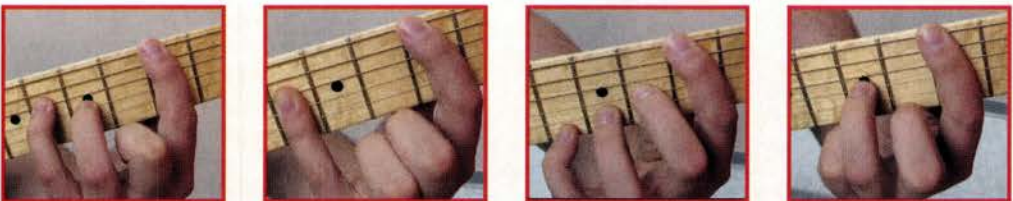
as "Yesterdays," "Alone Together," and "Beautiful Love."

For further pedal-point adventures, try playing Ex. 2 up a half-step during the A section of a "rhythm changes" tune in Bb. Or, transpose it down to F to add variety to a jam on Coltrane's "A Love Supreme." Also, try playing just the chords, leaving the pedals to your bass player—*teamwork!* In gen-

eral, don't get hung up on naming every cluster. Trust your ears and instincts, and pursue cool sounds and colors.


*A guitar clinician and former G.I.T. instructor, Pino Marrone has worked with his mentor, Joe Diorio, as well as with Dianne Reeves, Joe Farrell, and Kenny Kirkland. Contact him at [pino\\_marrone@hotmail.com](mailto:pino_marrone@hotmail.com).*

**Ex. 2**



♩ = 100-120  
 ♩ = 100-120

Bbmaj7b5/A Eb/A A13#9 Bbmaj7b5/A A7sus4b9 Eb/A Bbmaj7b5/A



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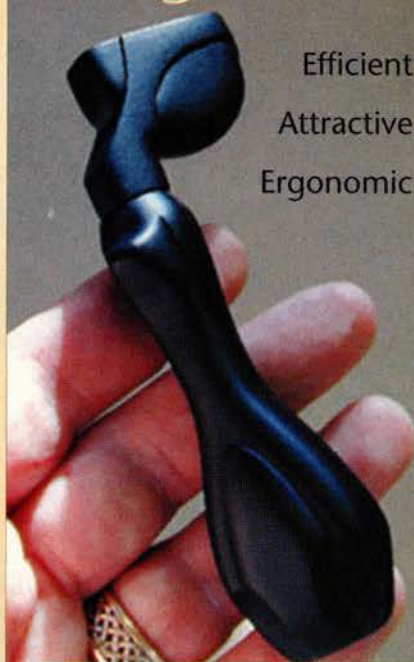
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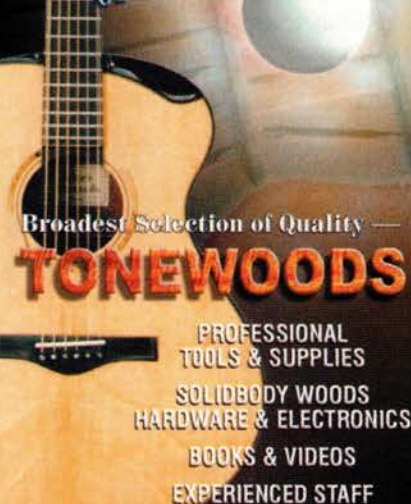
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## Exotica

Continued from page 123

was to crank just briefly, but with its stellar intonation and highly responsive humbucker, the 1C-P is one of those time-warping guitars that makes hours go by in the space of minutes—you look up, and it's dark outside and the plants need watering.

I was curious about one of the guitar's unique features—the rotating pickup. Just how much does repositioning it change the tone? Well, while you'll hear added upper-mids on the higher strings when you turn it clockwise, the most impressive characteristic is the double-coil's overall sparkle. Even within a fat barre chord, you can really hear each string. And, with help from its active circuitry, the hand-wound humbucker is aching to provide sustain. Amazingly, the 1C-P allowed me to coax musical feedback out of a Fender Twin Reverb running at a cool volume of about 3. Pulling up on the tone knob splits the coils and drops the bottom out of your tone—great for shimmering overdubs or skanky rhythm parts.

The home-grown piezo pickup system is incorporated into a Schaller bridge. Turner machines the string saddles on a jeweler's lathe, and then mounts each one atop a block of piezo-ceramic crystal. A blend knob on the guitar's upper bout lets you combine the piezo pickup with the humbucker. Should you wish to run the piezo signal through a separate amp—or straight into the board—a stereo output circuit is available as an option. The 1C-P's piezo system provides satisfying acoustic-electric sounds, but it's quite microphonic. Tapping my palm directly on the bridge almost sent the Twin's JBL speaker cones into the next county.

Switching on the 1C-P's quasi-parametric EQ yields a rainbow of guitar textures. For kicks, I plugged the 1C-P direct into Pro Tools, and recorded the same lick back to back several times, changing the tone, EQ, and pickup settings before each take. The playback revealed an awesome collage of sounds. However, the 1C-P's active EQ is not for amateurs. Boost the wrong frequencies, and you can get ear-shattering highs or woofer-killing lows.

With its exotic woods, fine detailing, and unique shape and size, the 1C-P is a real attention-getter. Soundwise, it's full of glorious incongruities—who would think that such a classy looking instrument could behave so rudely through a pair of EL84s? Or that a diminutive solidbody could generate fat, Gibson-like jazz tones? Test-driving the 1C-P for a week, it was easy to see why Fleetwood Mac alum Lindsey Buckingham uses Turners to voice his platinum-selling rock 'n' roll—these unique guitars really *speak*.

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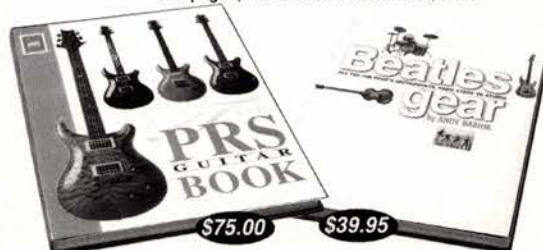
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It all started as a sort of teenage rivalry...

I'd slave at the piano for five hours daily. Linda practiced far less. Yet somehow she always shined as the star performer at our school. It was frustrating. What does she have that I don't? I'd wonder.

Linda's best friend, Sheryl, bragged on and on to me, adding more fuel to my fire. "You could never be as good as Linda," she would taunt. "Linda's got Perfect Pitch."

"What's Perfect Pitch?" I asked.

Sheryl gloated about some of Linda's uncanny abilities: how she could name exact tones and chords—all BY EAR; how she could sing any tone—from mere memory; how she could play songs—after just hearing them!

My heart sank. Her fantastic EAR is the key to her success. How could I ever hope to compete with her? But it bothered me. Did she really have Perfect Pitch? I finally asked Linda point-blank if it was true.

"Yes," she nodded to me aloofly.

But Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "Can I test you sometime?"

"OK," she replied.

Now she'd eat her words...

My plot was ingeniously simple: When Linda least suspected, I challenged her to name tones—by ear.

I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made sure other classmates could not help her. I set up everything perfectly so I could expose her Perfect Pitch claims as a ridiculous joke.

With silent apprehension, I selected a tone to play. (She'll never guess F#!)

I had barely touched the key.

"F#," she said. I was astonished.

I played another tone.

"C," she announced, not stopping to think.

Frantically, I played more tones, skipping here and there all over the keyboard. But somehow she knew the pitch each time. She was AMAZING!

"Sing an E#," I demanded, determined to mess her up. She sang a tone. I checked her on the keyboard—but she was right on!

Now I started to boil.

I called out more tones, trying hard to make them increasingly difficult. Still she sang each note perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "How in the world do you do it?" I blurted.

"I don't know," she

sighed. And that was all I could get out of her!

The dazzle of Perfect Pitch hit me like a ton of bricks. My head was dizzy with disbelief. Yet from then on, I knew that Perfect Pitch was real.

I couldn't figure it out...

"How does she DO it?" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why can't everyone recognize tones by ear? It dawned on me: people call themselves musicians and yet they can't tell a C# from a C?? Or A major from F major?! That's as strange as a

portrait painter who can't name the colors of paint on his palette! It all seemed odd and contradictory.

Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this problem. At age 14, this was a hard nut to crack.

You can be sure I tried it for myself. With a little sweet-talking, I would get my three brothers and two sisters to play tones for me—to name by ear. But it turned into a guessing game I just couldn't win.

Day after day I tried to learn Perfect Pitch. I would play a tone over and over to make it stick in my head. But later I couldn't remember any of them. And I couldn't recognize any of the tones by ear. Somehow they all sounded the same after awhile; how were you supposed to know which was which—just by listening?

I would have done anything to have an ear like Linda, but it was way beyond my reach.

So, finally, I gave up.

Then it happened...

It was like a miracle... a twist of fate... like finding the lost Holy Grail. Once I stopped straining my ear, I started to listen NATURALLY. Then the incredible secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not visual colors, but colors of pitch, colors of sound. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever really "let go"—and listened—to discover these subtle differences.

Soon—to my own disbelief—I too could recognize the tones by ear! It was simple. I could hear how F# sounds one way, while Bb has a totally different sound—sort of like "hearing" red and blue!

The realization struck me: THIS IS PERFECT PITCH! This is how Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart could mentally envision their masterpieces—and





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know tones, chords, and keys—all by ear!

It was almost childish—I felt sure that *anyone* could unlock their own Perfect Pitch by learning this simple secret of “color hearing.”

Bursting with excitement, I went to tell my best friend, Ann (a flutist).

She *laughed* at me. “You have to be *born* with Perfect Pitch,” she asserted. “You can’t *develop* it.”

“You don’t *know* Perfect Pitch,” I countered.

I showed her how to listen. Timidly, she confessed that she too could hear the pitch colors. With this jump start, Ann soon realized that she had also gained Perfect Pitch for herself.

We became instant celebrities. Classmates loved to call out tones for us to magically sing from thin air. They played chords for us to name by ear. They quizzed us on what key a song was in. Everyone was endlessly fascinated with our “super-natural” powers, yet to Ann and me, it was just normal.

Back then I never dreamt I would later cause such a stir in the academic world. But as I entered college and started to explain my discovery, many professors *laughed* at me.

“You must be *born* with Perfect Pitch,” they’d say. “You can’t *develop* it.”

I would listen politely. Then I’d reveal the simple secret—so they could hear it for themselves. You’d be surprised how fast they changed their tune!

In college, my so-called “perfect ear” allowed me to skip over two required music courses. Perfect Pitch made *everything* easier for me—my ability to perform, compose, arrange, transpose, improvise, sight-read (because—without looking—you’re sure you’re playing the correct tones)—and my *enjoyment* of music skyrocketed. I learned that music is very definitely a HEARING art.

Oh, so you must be wondering what happened with Linda? Please excuse me, I’ll have to backtrack...

It was now my senior year of high school. I was nearly 18. In these three-and-a-half years with Perfect Pitch, my piano teacher insisted I had made ten years of progress. And I had. But my youthful ambition still wasn’t satisfied. I needed one more thing: to beat Linda. And now was my *final chance*.

The University of Delaware hosts a music festival

each spring, complete with judges and awards. To my horror, they scheduled me that year as the *grand finale* of the entire event.

The day arrived. Linda gave her usual sterling performance. She would be tough to match, let alone surpass. But my turn finally came, and I went for it.

Slinking to the stage, I sat down and played my heart out. The applause was overwhelming.

Later, posted on the bulletin board, I discovered my score of A+ in the most advanced performance category.

Linda got an A. Sweet victory was music to my ears—mine at last!

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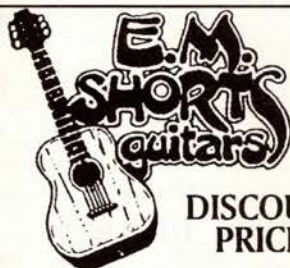
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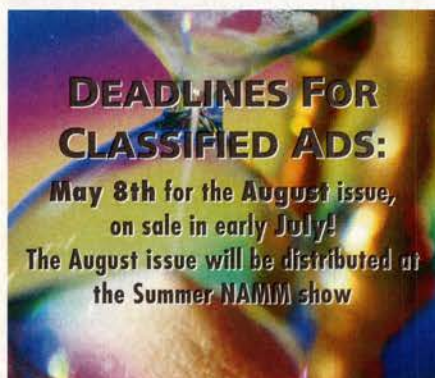
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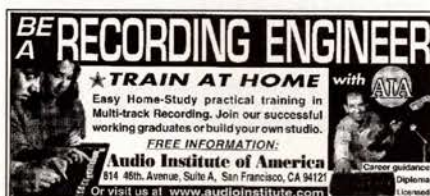
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Alvarez/alvarezgtr.com	39
Baker Guitars/bakerguitars.com	112
Brian Moore/BrianMooreGuitars.com	5
Burns USA/BurnsUSA.com/866-677-0056	119
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Crafter/hohnerusa.com/804-515-1900	16
D'Angelico/dangelicoguitars.com/908-518-9010	126
Dean Guitars/deanguitars.com/727-519-9669	88
Deering/deeringbanjos.com/800-845-7791 x.107	142
Fender/fender.com/480-596-9690	9
Framus/framus.com/877-747-4734	90
G&L/glguitars.com/714-897-6766	12
Godin/godinguitars.com/514-457-7977	14, 42, 103
Lace Music/lacemusic.com/800-575-5223	46
Lollar Guitars/lollarguitars.com/206-463-9838	135
PRS/prsguitars.com/410-643-9970	3, 94
Peavey/peavey.com/mi/wolfgang_series.html	101
Saga Musical Instruments/sagamus.com/650-588-5558	76
Seagull/seagullguitars.com/650-588-5558	108
Takamine/takamine.com/	BC
Taylor Guitars/taylorguitars.com/619-258-1207	18/19
Terry C. McInturf Guitars/mcinturfguitars.com/919-552-4586	135
Yamaha/yamaha.com/guitars/714-522-9011	66
Warrior/warriorinstruments.com/706-891-3009	60
Zion Guitar Technology/zionguitars.com/919-754-9790	78

## AMPLIFIERS

Alessandro/alessandro-products.com/215-355-6424	134
Bellari/rolls.com/801-263-9053	32
Carvin/carvin.com/800-854-2235	30
Crate/crateamps.com/	79
Fender/fender.com/480-596-9690	61
Framus/framus.com/877-747-4734	90
Hartke/hartke.com	113
Hughes & Kettner/hughes-and-kettner.com/zentera/800-452-6771	2
Koch/koch-amps.com/612-675-3650	80
Marshall/marshallamps.com	28/29
Matchless/matchlessamplifiers.com/310-481-8231	32
Motion Sound/motion-sound.com/801-265-0917	115
Presonus/presonus.com/800-750-0323	116
Roccaforte Amps/roccafortetamps.com/949-488-0259	34
THD Electronics/thdelectronics.com/206-781-5500	104
Yorkville/yorkville.com/718-297-2920	110
Victoria/victoriaamp.com/630-369-3527	135
Vox/voxamps.co.uk/631-393-8530	52/53

## STRINGS

D'Addario/daddario/800-DADARIO	44
Dean Markley/deanmarkley.com/800-800-1008	33
Ernie Ball/ernieball.com/805-544-7726	1
GHS/ghsstrings.com/800-388-4447	10

## RECORDINGS

IK Multimedia Productions/amplitube.com/866-243-1718	75
Magna Carta/magnacarta.com/	115
Prawn Song Records/prawnsong.com/	74
Universal Music Group/universalrecords.com/	58

## RECORDING EQUIPMENT

Digittech/digittech/gp.com/615-620-3800	57
Korg/korg.com/d1600/800-335-0800	36
ToneWorks/korg.com/800-335-0800	IFC
Zoom/samsontech.com/516-364-2244	43

## PARTS/COMPONENTS/PICKUPS/ACCESSORIES

Allparts/281-391-0637	135
Coffin Case/CoffinCase.com/818-767-3511	126
Discount Distributors/discount-distributors.com/800-346-4638	114
Fishman/fishman.com/508-988-9199	8
Furman/furmansound.com/707-763-1010	131
George L's/georgels.com/615-868-6976	38
Grover/grover.com/	135
IK Multimedia Productions/amplitube.com/866-243-1718	75

Kinman/kinman.com/	50
Luthiers Mercantile/lmli.com/800-477-4437	142
PedalPad/pedalpad.com/785-862-4723	130
Peterson Electro-Musical Products/PetersonTuners.com/708-388-3311	40
Planet Waves/planet-waves.com/800-DADARIO	71
Seymour Duncan/seymourduncan.com/805-964-9610	59
Shubb Capos/shubb.com/707-876-3001	142
Tech21/tech21nyc.com/212-315-1116	118
Visual Sound/visualsound.net/561-637-6678	60
Warmoth/warmoth.com/253-845-0403	16

## EFFECTS DEVICES/SIGNAL PROCESSORS

BBE/bbesound.com/714-897-6766	70
Bellari/rolls.com/801-263-9053	32
Boss/bossUS.com/800-386-7575	15
Digittech/digittech/gp.com/615-620-3800	6/7, 48, 57
Dunlop/jimdunlop.com/707-745-2722	69
Electro-Harmonix/ehx.com/212-529-0486	105
European Musical Imports/europeanmusical.com/201-594-0817	134
GodLyke/godlyke.com/973-835-2100	47
IK Multimedia Productions/amplitube.com/866-243-1718	75
Line6/Line6.com/818-575-3600	4
Morley/morleypedals.com/847-639-4646	35
Presonus/presonus.com/800-750-0323	116
Rocktron/rocktron.com/800-432-7625	92
Roger Linn Design/rogerlinndesign.com	50
Roger Mayer Analog Effects/rogermayerusa.com/800-228-3538	102
Tech21/tech21nyc.com/212-315-1116	118
ToneWorks/korg.com/800-335-0800	77
VHT/vhtamp.com/818-253-4848	102
Voodoo Lab/voodoolab.com/800-986-6696	IBC
Zoom/samsontech.com/516-364-2244	11

## MICROPHONES/WIRELESS/SOUND REINFORCEMENT

AKG/akgusa.com/615-620-3800	51
Eminence/www.eminence.com/502-845-5622	17
Samson/www.samsonetech/516-364-2244	99

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Musician's Friend/musiciansfriend.com/800-776-5173	81
Musictech College/musictech.com/800-594-9500	130
SAE/sae.edu/877-27-AUDIO	80
TrueFire.com/truefire.com/	131

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Elderly/elderly.com/517-372-7890	58
GGuitars/Gguitars.com/203-786-4734	134
Luthiers Mercantile/lmli.com/800-477-4437	142
Musician's Friend/musiciansfriend.com/800-776-5173	81
Sam Ash/samash.cm/800-4-SAMASH	124/125
Shreve Audio/shreveaudio.com/800-214-9222	120
Shreve Audio/shreveaudio.com/800-214-9222	120
TheTwelfth Fret/12fret.com/416-423-2132	135
West LA Music/westlamusic.com/310-477-1945	74

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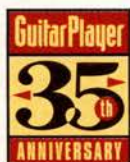
D'Angelico Giveaway/musicplayer.com	129
John Lennon Songwriting Contest/jlsc.com	133
Line6/Line6.com/805-379-8900	4
MPN/thetrackexchange.com	120
Musicplayer.com/musicplayer.com	114
Musics Summit 2002/musicplayer.com	121
Ultrasound/ultrasoundrehearsal.com/212-967-5626	112
US Air Force Band of the West/lackland.af.mil/bow/210-671-3934	131

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# Encore CLASSIC INTERVIEW • RY COODER • 1980



## GUITAR PLAYER, MARCH 1980—

My great pal Steve Fishell turned me on to Ry Cooder years before I arrived at *Guitar Player*. A fine writer and soulful steel player who went on to work with Emmylou Harris, Steve was the perfect author for our Ry Cooder cover story.

In these excerpts, Cooder tells the tale of his search for legendary Mexican accordion player Flaco Jimenez—a journey that foreshadowed his musicological pilgrimages of the '90s (culminating in the Grammy-winning *Buena Vista Social Club*)—and how he assembled an unlikely collection of American gospel singers and Mexican musicians to create an unforgettable musical experience. He also recounts recording with jazz-piano giant Earl Hines. —TOM WHEELER

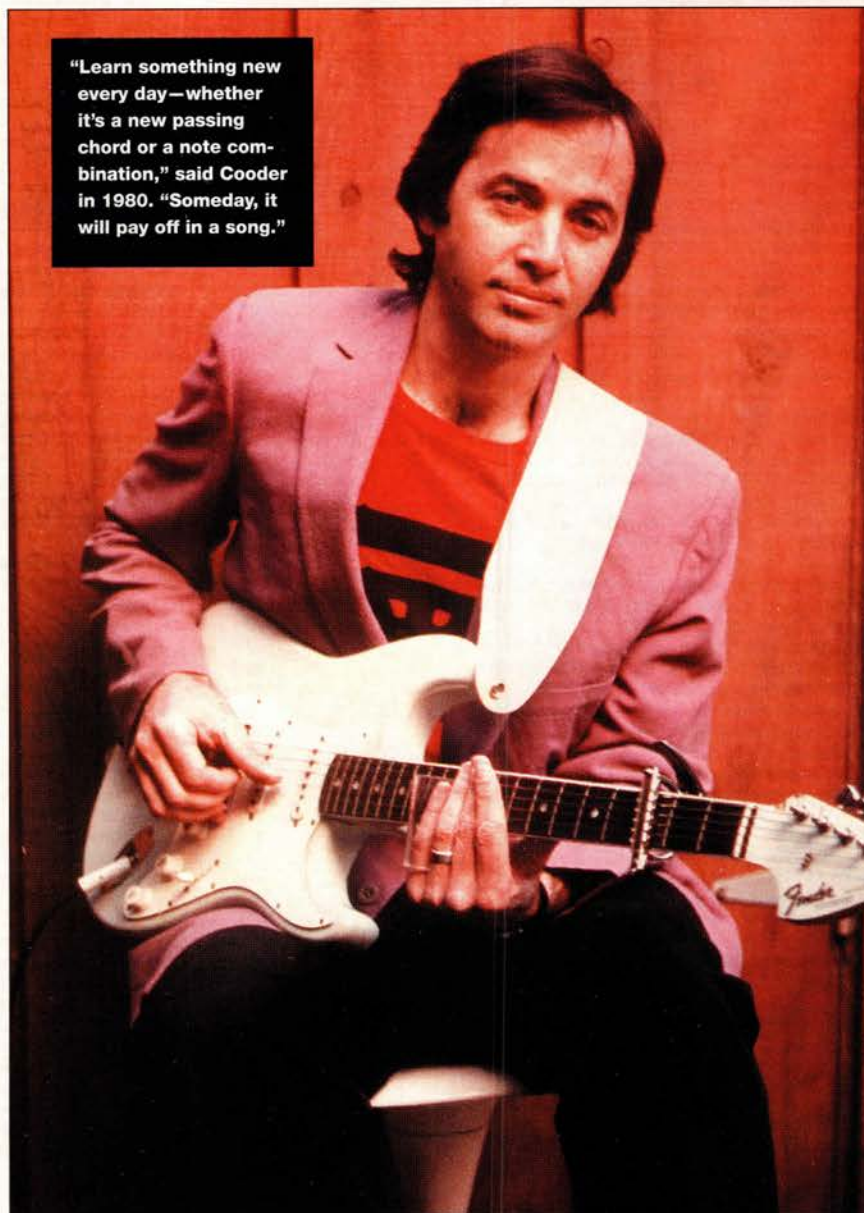
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*How did you track down Flaco Jimenez?*

[Arhoolie Records'] Chris Strachwitz was involved in Norteño, or Tex-Mex music, which features this Mexican accordion. He had planned a trip to Texas to make a movie, so he and I traveled the countryside to meet the people he wanted to film. We'd ask, "Where's Flaco?" They'd say, "Make a left turn, right turn, then go three blocks and go down the alley." Then we'd get there, and they would say, "Oh no, Flaco moved six months ago." We went through this forever. Finally we pulled up in this yard, and there he was—the man himself. That night, Flaco played a dance in some metal pre-fab warehouse that they converted into a joint with tables and beer, and it was unbelievable—the greatest live music I've ever seen.

*Did Flaco's musicians have doubts about rehearsing with gospel singers like Bobby King?*

They didn't know what the hell was going on, and Flaco didn't know who Bobby King was. Bobby said, "What kind of band is it?" I said, "These guys are good—trust me." We had a seven-week tour lined up and a 40-foot bus with ten beds. I called up the Mexicans and said, "Okay, this is it. Get your gear packed



"Learn something new every day—whether it's a new passing chord or a note combination," said Cooder in 1980. "Someday, it will pay off in a song."

and get roadworthy, because in two weeks that bus is coming and we're leaving." They didn't believe it at all. I got my singers and my road manager, and we went down there two weeks before the tour was supposed to start. They all met for the first time, hit a chord, played the first tune, and it sounded *fantastic*—just like I knew it would! We hit Oklahoma City on our first stop, and the audience went nuts. I'll never forget that night.

*How did you happen to record "Ditty Wah Ditty" with Earl "Fatha" Hines?*

He didn't know me from Adam. I called

and said, "Would you like to come down to the studio?" He said, "Fine, I'm not doing anything." He proceeded to play that tune *to death!* I could barely keep up with him. Once in a while, you get to play with somebody like that, and it's the dream of a lifetime. Earl was someone with unattainable greatness—an unthinkable plateau of existence—and this was confirmed by meeting him. It's good to know there are people who are so much better and more capable than you'll ever be. It's comforting and it makes life a lot easier. I used to be troubled by that stuff, but not anymore. ■



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Photo: Neal Preston

Late night at the Shrine Auditorium

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